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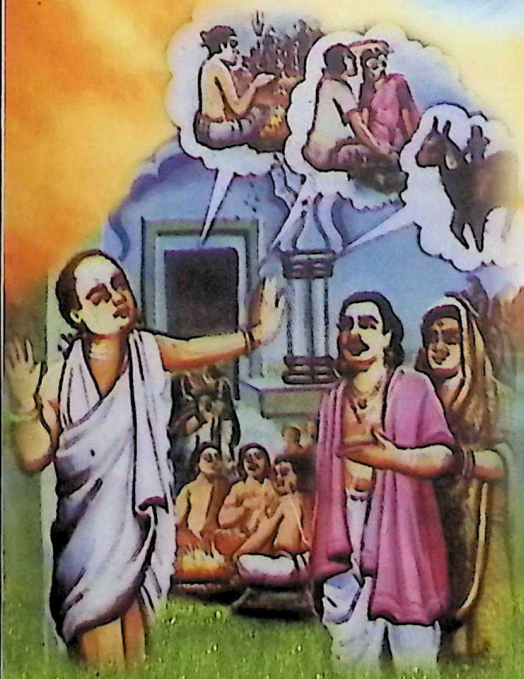
COMPARISON OF LINGAYATHISM WITH HINDUISM



Nagshetty K. Shetkar

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!!Om Sri Guru Basava Lingyanamha!!
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Suyidhana Sugrantha Male's 149th Publication

Comparison of Lingayathism with Hinduism

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ಓಂ ಶ್ರೀ ಗುರು ಬಸವಲಿಂಗಾಯ ನಮಃ

ಪ್ರಕಾಶಕರ ಮಾತು

ಶರಣ ನಾಗಶೆಟ್ಟಿ. ಕೆ. ಶಟಕಾರ ಇವರು ಎಂ.ಫಿಲ್ ಪದವಿಗಾಗಿ "A Critical Comparative Study of Lingayathism and Hinduism"ಎಂಬ ಮಹತ್ವಪೂರ್ಣವಾದ ವಿಷಯವನ್ನು ಆರಿಸಿಕೊಂಡು ಆಂಧ್ರ ಪ್ರದೇಶದ ದ್ರಾವಿಡ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯದಿಂದ ಎಂ.ಫಿಲ್ ಪದವಿಯನ್ನು ಪಡೆದಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ವಿಷಯವು ಅತೀವ ಮಹತ್ವದ್ದಾಗಿದೆ. ಲಿಂಗಾಯತ ಧರ್ಮವು ಒಂದು ಸ್ವತಂತ್ರ ಧರ್ಮ, ಹಿಂದೂ ಧರ್ಮದೊಳಗಣ ಒಂದು ಜಾತಿಮತ ಪಂಥವಲ್ಲ ಎಂದು ನಮ್ಮನ್ನು ಸೇರಿಸಿಕೊಂಡು ಇನ್ನೂ ಅನೇಕರು ಹೇಳುತ್ತಿದ್ದೇವಾದರೂ ಇದಕ್ಕೆ ಆಧಾರ ಒದಗಿಸುವ ಅಧಿಕೃತ ಗ್ರಂಥವೊಂದು ಹೊರಬಂದಿರಲಿಲ್ಲ. ಇಂಥ ಮಹತ್ವದ ವಿಷಯ ಆರಿಸಿಕೊಂಡು ಒಂದು ಅಧಿಕೃತ ಗ್ರಂಥವನ್ನು ಅದೂ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯದ ಎಂ.ಫಿಲ್ ಮುದ್ರೆ ಬಿದ್ದಂತಹ ಒಂದು ಕೃತಿಯನ್ನು ಸಮಾಜಕ್ಕೆ ಅರ್ಪಿಸುತ್ತಿರುವುದು ಅಭಿನಂದನಾರ್ಹ ಸಂಗತಿಯಾಗಿದೆ. ಈ ಪದವಿಯ ಗಳಕೆಯ ಹಿಂದೆ ಶರಣ ನಾಗಶೆಟ್ಟಿಯವರ ಪ್ರಯತ್ನ ಮತ್ತು ಪರಿಶ್ರಮ ಅನನ್ಯ.

ಪ್ರಸ್ತುತ ಕೃತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮೂರು ಭಾಗಗಳಿದ್ದು ಒಂದನೆಯದರಲ್ಲಿ "ಹಿಂದು" ಧರ್ಮದ ಸ್ವರೂಪ ಕುರಿತು ಚಿಂತನೆ ಮಾಡಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಎರಡನೆಯದರಲ್ಲಿ ಲಿಂಗಾಯತ ಧರ್ಮದ ಸ್ವರೂಪ ಕುರಿತು ಚಿಂತನೆ ಮಾಡಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಮೂರನೆಯದರಲ್ಲಿ ಹಿಂದೂ ಧರ್ಮ ಮತ್ತು ಲಿಂಗಾಯತ ಧರ್ಮಗಳ ತೌಲನಿಕ ಅಧ್ಯಯನ ಮಾಡಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಹಿಂದು ಧರ್ಮದ ಬೇರುಗಳನ್ನರಸಲು ಹರಪ್ಪ-ಮೊಹೆಂಜೋದಾರೋ ಉತ್ಖನನದ ವರೆಗೆ ನಾಗಶೆಟ್ಟಿಯವರು ಸಾಗಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಬ್ರಾಹ್ಮಣ, ಕ್ಷತ್ರಿಯ, ವೈಶ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಶೂದ್ರ ಎಂಬ ಚತುರ್ವರ್ಣಗಳು, ಬ್ರಹ್ಮಚರ್ಯ, ಗೃಹಸ್ಥ, ವಾನಪ್ರಸ್ಥ, ಸನ್ಯಾಸ ಎಂಬ ನಾಲ್ಕು ಆಶ್ರಮಗಳನ್ನು ವೈಜಾನಿಕವಾಗಿ ವಿಶ್ಲೇಷಿಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಹಿಂದು ಧರ್ಮದ ಜೀವಾಳವಾದ ಯೋಗವನ್ನು ಸಹ ಪರಿಚಯಿಸಿರುವುದಲ್ಲದೆ ರಾಜಯೋಗ, ಕರ್ಮಯೋಗ, ಭಕ್ತಿಯೋಗ, ಜ್ಞಾನಯೋಗಗಳ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ವಿಶದವಾಗಿ ಬರೆದಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

ಎರಡನೆಯ ಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ಲಿಂಗಾಯತ ಧರ್ಮದ ಸ್ವರೂಪ ಕುರಿತು ಚಿಂತನೆ ಮಾಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಲಿಂಗಾಯತ ಮತ್ತು ವೀರಶೈವಗಳಲ್ಲಿರುವ ವ್ಯತ್ಯಾಸ; ಲಿಂಗಾಯತ ಧರ್ಮದ ಸ್ಥಾಪನೆ; ಧರ್ಮ ಸ್ಥಾಪಕ ಗುರು ಬಸವಣ್ಣನವರ ಜೀವನ ಪರಿಚಯ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಟ್ಟಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಶಕ್ತಿ ವಿಶಿಷ್ಟಾದ್ವೈತ ಸಿದ್ಧಾಂತ, ಅಷ್ಟಾವರಣ, ಪಂಚಾಚಾರ, ಷಟಸ್ಥಲಗಳ ಪರಿಚಯ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಟ್ಟಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಜಗತ್ತಿನ ಮೊಟ್ಟ ಮೊದಲ ಲೋಕಸಭೆ ಎಂಬ ಹೆಗ್ಗಳಿಕೆಗೆ ಪಾತ್ರವಾಗಬಹುದಾದ ಅನುಭವ ಮಂಟಪದ ಪರಿಚಯ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಟ್ಟಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

ಮೂರನೆಯ ಭಾಗ ಹಿಂದು ಮತ್ತು ಲಿಂಗಾಯತ ಧರ್ಮಗಳ ಮಧ್ಯದ ಸಾಮ್ಯತೆ-ಭಿನ್ನತೆಗಳನ್ನು ವಿವರಿಸುತ್ತದೆ. ಕರ್ಮ ಸಿದ್ಧಾಂತ. ಓಂಕಾರ, ಆತ್ಮದ ಪರಿಕಲ್ಪನೆ

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ಮುಂತಾದ ಕೆಲವು ವಿಷಯಗಳಲ್ಲಲಿ ಎರಡೂ ಧರ್ಮಗಳ ಮಧ್ಯೆ ಹೋಲಿಕೆ ಇದೆ. ಆದರೆ ಉಳದಂತೆ ಎಲ್ಲ ವಿಷಯಗಳಲ್ಲೂ ಲಿಂಗಾಯತವು ಬೇರೆಯಾಗಿಯೇ ನಿಲ್ಲುತ್ತದೆ. ಹಿಂದು ಧರ್ಮಕ್ಕೆ ಒಬ್ಬ ಸ್ಥಾಪಕರಿಲ್ಲ, ಲಿಂಗಾಯತವು ಪರಿಷ್ಕರಣಗೊಂಡ ಪ್ರಗತಿಪರ ಧರ್ಮ. .ವೇದ ಉಪನಿಷತ್ತು, ಶ್ರುತಿ, ಸ್ಮೃತಿಗಳೇ ಹಿಂದು ಧರ್ಮದ ಆಧಾರ ಗ್ರಂಥಗಳಾದರೆ; ಈ ಗ್ರಂಥಗಳ ಅನೇಕ ವಿಚಾರಗಳನ್ನು ವಿರೋಧಿಸುವ ಲಿಂಗಾಯತ ಧರ್ಮಕ್ಕೆ ವಚನ ಸಾಹಿತ್ಯವೇ ಸಂವಿಧಾನ. .ಹಿಂದು ಧರ್ಮದ ಶಾಸ್ತ್ರೀಯ ಭಾಷೆ ಪಂಡಿತರ ಭಾಷೆಯಾದ ಸಂಸ್ಕೃತವಾದರೆ; ಲಿಂಗಾಯತದ ಧರ್ಮಭಾಷೆ ನೆಲದ ಭಾಷೆಯಾದ ಕನ್ನಡ; ಹಿಂದು ಧರ್ಮದ ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕ ರಚನೆ ಮುಖ್ಯವಾಗಿ ಬ್ರಾಹ್ಮಣ, ಕ್ಷತ್ರಿಯ, ವೈಶ್ಯ ಎಂಬ ಐದು ವರ್ಗಗಳಂದ ಕೂಡಿದ್ದರೆ ಲಿಂಗಾಯತ ಧರ್ಮವು ಸಮಾಜವನ್ನು ಈ ರೀತಿ ವರ್ಗೀಕರಿಸದೆ ಎಲ್ಲರನ್ನೂ ಸಮಾನವಾಗಿ ಕಾಣುತ್ತದೆ. ಚತುರ್ವರ್ಣಾಧಾರಿತ ಸಮಾಜವು ಶೂದ್ರ, ಅಸ್ಪೃಶ್ಯರಿಗೆ ಹಾಗೂ ಸ್ತ್ರೀಯರಿಗೆ ದೀಕ್ಷಾ ಸಂಸ್ಕಾರವನ್ನು ಕೊಡುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ೧೨ನೆಯ ಶತಮಾನದಲ್ಲಿಯೇ ಕ್ರಾಂತಿಪುರುಷ ಬಸವಣ್ಣನವರು ಮಹಿಳೆಯರಿಗೆ ದೀಕ್ಷಾ ಸಂಸ್ಕಾರವನ್ನು ನಿಡಿದ್ದಲ್ಲದೆ ಅವರಿಗೆ ಎಲ್ಲ ಬಗೆಯ ಧಾರ್ಮಿಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕ ಹಕ್ಕುಗಳನ್ನು ನೀಡಿದರು. ಜೊತೆಗೆ ವಿಧವಾ ವಿವಾಹವನ್ನು ಜಾರಿಗೆ ತಂದರು.

ಭಾರತದಲ್ಲಿ ಹುಟ್ಟಿರುವ ಹಿಂದು ಧರ್ಮ ಬಹುದೇವತೋಪಾಸನೆಯ ಧರ್ಮ. ಜೈನ ಮತ್ತು ಬೌದ್ಧ ಧರ್ಮಗಳು ನಿರೀಶ್ವರವಾದಿ ಧರ್ಮಗಳು. ವೈಚಾರಿಕತೆಯಿಂದ ಕೂಡಿದ ಏಕದೇವೋಪಾಸನೆಯನ್ನು ಭಾರತದಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರತಿಪಾದಿಸಿದ ಮೊಟ್ಟ ಮೊದಲನೆಯ ಸಂತರು ವಿಶ್ವರುಗು ಬಸವಣ್ಣನವರು. ಸಿಖ್ ಧರ್ಮವು ಏಕೇಶ್ವರವಾದವನ್ನು ಪ್ರತಿಪಾದಿಸಿದ್ದು ನಿಜವಾದರೂ ಸಿಖ್ ಧರ್ಮ ಹುಟ್ಟಿದ್ದು ನಂತರ ಎಂಬುದು ಗಮನಾರ್ಹ. ಲಿಂಗಾಯತ ಧರ್ಮವು ಪ್ರಗತಿಪರ ಮತ್ತು ಸುಧಾರಣಾತ್ಮಕವಾದ ಧರ್ಮ. ಜ್ಯೋತಿಷ್ಯ, ಮುಹೂರ್ತ, ಜಾತಕ, ಪಂಚಸೂತಕ ಜಾತಿ ಪದ್ಧತಿ–ಮುಂತಾದ ಎಲ್ಲವನ್ನೂ ನಿರಾಕರಿಸಿದ ಧರ್ಮ. "ಹಿಂದು ಸಮಾಜದ ಮಧ್ಯೆ ಲಿಂಗಾಯತವು ಒಂದು ದ್ವೀಪದಂತೆ" ಎಂದು ಪಾಶ್ಚಿಮಾತ್ಯ ವಿದ್ವಾಂಸರು ಹೇಳಿರುವುದಲ್ಲದೆ ಗುರು ಬಸವಣ್ಣನವರು ಭಾರತದ ಮೊಟ್ಟ ಮೊದಲ ಸ್ವತಂತ್ರ ವಿಚಾರವಾದಿ ಎಂದು ಶ್ಲಾಘಿಸಲಾದೆ.

ನಾಲ್ಕು–ಐದು ಸಾಲಿನ ವಚನಗಳು ಜೀವನಕ್ಕೆ ಉತ್ತಮ ಮಾರ್ಗದರ್ಶನ ಮಾಡಬಲ್ಲ ಸೈದ್ಧಾಂತಿಕ ತುಣುಕುಗಳಾಗಿವೆ. ಇವು ಜೀವನ್ಮುಖಿ ಸಿದ್ಧಾಂತವನ್ನು ಭೋಧಿಸುತ್ತವಲ್ಲದೆ, ಜೀವನ ನಿರಾಕರಣ ಸಿದ್ಧಾಂತವನ್ನಲ್ಲ. ಈ ಜೀವನವು ಸೃಷ್ಟಿಕರ್ತನು ಕೊಟ್ಟ ಮಹಾನ್ ಕೊಡುಗೆ. ಬದುಕುವ ಬಗೆ ಒಂದು ಕಲೆ ಆದ್ದರಿಂದ ದೇಹವನ್ನು ಉಪವಾಸಾದಿ ವ್ರತಗಳಂದ ದಂಡಿಸದೆ, ಜಗತ್ತನ್ನು ಮಾಯೆಯೆಂದು, ಮಿಥ್ಯವೆಂದು ಜರಿಯದೆ ಇವನ್ನು ಸಾಧನವಾಗಿ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಂಡು ಜಗತ್ತಿನ ಕರ್ತನನ್ನು ಕಾಣಬೇಕು ಎಂಬುದೇ ವಚನ ವಾಙ್ಮಯದ ಮರ್ಮ. ಹೀಗೆ ಲಿಂಗಾಯತವು ಒಂದು ಪ್ರಯೋಗಿಕ ಗುಣಶೀಲ ಧರ್ಮ, ವೈಚಾರಿಕ ಮತ್ತು ಪ್ರಗತಿಪರ ಚಿಂತನೆಯುಳ್ಳದ್ದು.

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ಇಂಥ ಲಿಂಗಾಯತ ಧರ್ಮವನ್ನು ಶಾಸ್ತ್ರೀಯವಾಗಿ ಅಧ್ಯಯನಮಾಡಿ, ಎಂ. ಫಿಲ್ ಪದವಿಗೆ ಪ್ರೌಢ ಪ್ರಬಂಧವನ್ನು ನೀಡುವ ಮೂಲಕ ಶರಣ ನಾಗಶೆಟ್ಟಿ. ಕೆ. ಶೆಟಕಾರ ಬಹುದೊಡ್ಡ ಸಾಧನೆ ಮಾಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಜೊತೆಗೆ ವಿಶ್ವಕಲ್ಯಾಣ ಮಿಷನ್ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗೆ ಪ್ರಕಾಶನಕ್ಕೆ ಅವಕಾಶ ಮಾಡಿ. ಕೊಟ್ಟಿರುವುದು ನಮಗೆ ಸಂತೊಷ ಮತ್ತು ತೃಪ್ತಿಯನ್ನು ತಂದಿದೆ. ಯಾವುದೇ ಲೋಪದೋಷಗಳು ಕಂಡು ಬಂದಲ್ಲಿ ಸಹೃದಯ ಓದುಗರು ಲೇಖಕರ ಅಥವಾ ಪ್ರಕಾಶಕರ ಗಮನಕ್ಕೆ ತಂದಲ್ಲಿ ಅವಶ್ಯಕ ಬದಲಾವಣೆಗಳನ್ನು ಮಾಡಲಾಗುವುದು. ಇಂಥ ಒಂದು ಗ್ರಂಥದ ಅವಶ್ಯಕತೆ ಬಹಳ ಇತ್ತು. ಆ ಕೊರತೆಯನ್ನು ನಿವಾರಿಸಿ ಕೊಟ್ಟದ್ದಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ಶರಣ ನಾಗಶೆಡಟ್ಟಿಯವರನ್ನು ಅಭಿನಂದಿಸುತೇವಲ್ಲದೆ, ಎಂ. ಫಿಲ್ ಪದವಿಗಾಗಿ ಬರೆದ ಪ್ರಬಂಧವನ್ನು ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸಲು ಅನುಮತಿ ನೀಡಿದ ದ್ರಾವಿಡ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯಕ್ಕೂ ಧನ್ಯವಾದ ಅರ್ಪಿಸುತ್ತೇವೆ.

ಪೂಜ್ಯ ಶ್ರೀ ಮಹಾಜಗದ್ಗುರು

ಮಾತೆ ಮಹಾದೇವಿ (ಮಾತಾಜಿ)

ಪ್ರಕಾಶಕರು

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Om Sri Guru Basavalingaya Namah

Publisher's Note

Sharana Nagshetty Shetkar has selected the subject "A Critical Comparative Study of Lingayathism and Hinduism" for his study in P. Phil and has completed it successfully. He has submitted a scholarly Dissertation. He got M. Phil Degree from Dravidian University of Kuppam of Andhra Pradesh.

The subject is very practical and important as well. Lingayathism is an independent region. It is neither a caste, cult, nor a sect in Hindu fold. Though many people including us are very definite that Lingayathism is an independent religion, a book like this which explains how Lingayathism is different from Hinduism had not come out. We have to appreciate Nagshetty Shetkar for selecting such a practical subject and for contributing an authoritative Dissertation which fetched M.Phil degree to him. He has put a sincere effort on that

The respective book consists of three parts; the first one is History and development of Hinduism; 1) salient features of Hinduism. 2) Salient features of Lingayathism. 3) Comparative study of Hinduism and Lingayathism; the author has studied Hinduism tracing its roots from Indus valley civilization. The salient feature of Hinduism is its classification of society into 5 divisions 1. Brahmin 2. Kshatriya. 3. Vaishya 4. Shudra and 5.Untouchable. The author of the Dissertation has dealt with not only 4 Varnas but with 4 Ashramas as well-Bramcharya, Gruhasthya, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa. He has written about Philosophical theories such as Advaitha, Dvaitha, Visisthadvaitha and Sakti Visishtadvaitha. Since he has dealt with Raja yoga, Karma Yoga, Bhakti yoga and Jnana Yoga too, the Dissertation is comprehensive.

The second part focuses on Lingayathism. Lingayathism and Veerashaivism are quite different and two parallel lines; which can never meet. This is established by Lord Basavanna in 12th Century itself. How he got inspired to establish a new religion? What are the factors which tempted him to leave Hinduism. The author has given brief introduction of life of Lord Basavanna and also of ShaktiVisisthadvaita, Asthavarana, Pachachara and Shatsthala. He has given details of Anubhava Mantapa, which can be called the first Parliament of the world.

The third part of the Dissertation deals with the comparative study of Hinduism and Lingayathism. Both similarities and differences

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between the two have been explained in the book. Common features are Karma Siddanta, Omkara, belief in Soul etc; But Lingayathism differs in many other features. Hinduism does not have one founder but Lingayathism has one founder Lord Basavanna. The latter one is a reformative religion. Authoritative sources of Hinduism are Vedas, Upanishads, Shruti, Smiriti, Bhagvadgita etc, whereas Vachana literature is the base Lingayathism. The Language of Hindu religion is Sanskrit whereas Kannada, the provincial language of the Land is the language of the religion. Lingayath religion disbelieves in social structure of Hinduism which divides society into 5 groups. Lingayathism eriticieses this ladder type division and proposes the theory of horizontal type of society and preaches equality of mankind.

Hinduism does not encourages religious consecration of woman, but Lord Basavanna gave all rights both religious and Social to women. Lord Basavanna was responsible for reforms in society. He introduced remarriage of widows. Hinduism is polytheistic. It believes in many gods and goddesses and their worship, whereas Lingayathism is monotheistic in belief. It believes in one only God, the creator and worships Him in the form of globular shaped Istalinga. Lord Basavanna is the first prophet in India who preached monotheism. That is why a western scholar, Arthur Miles says "Whatever legend may say about Basava the fact is fully clear that he is the first Indian free thinker. He can be called the Martin Luther of India. Jainism and Buddhism were atheistic religions; among Indian religions Sikhism preaches monotheism being a second one to Lingayathism. Lingayathism disbelieves in astrology, horoscopes, animal sacrifice, Yazna-Yaga and 5 pollutions like birth, death, caste etc. a western scholar exclaims "Lingayathism is like an Island in the Sea of Hinduism".

Vachana literature which forms the religious constitution of Lingayathism is very rich in Philosophy and Mysticism. Vachanas are short pithy sayings pregnant with rich thoughts. Vachana literature preaches life affirmation and world affirmation philosophy. It is against life negation and world negation approach. According to it "This mortal world is Creator's workshop. One who is successful here will be successful there also". Life is a great gift given by god and living is an art. Body is not a hindrance to achieve God. So one should not spoil this body, but use it as a means for achievement. Lingayathism does not say that this world is myth or illusion. It says that it is a divine play. In this way it is a practical, rational and progressive religion.

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Nagshetty Shetkar has done a meaningful effort which introduces this noble religion-Lingayathism to no-Kannada people. He is to be appreciated and felicitated for such an achievement. Along with that we feel happy and contented to publish this work on behalf of Viswakalyana Mission. If the readers find out any mistakes either philosophical or linguistic they are free to inform us to facilitate us to take needful action.

It is needless to mention that there was a great need for such a book. S owe are very thankful to Dravidian University which gave permission to choose such subject and which contented on M. Phil degree to the research scholar. At the same time we felicitate Nagshetty Shetkar for having done such a great job and for obliging us to publish such a thought provoking Dissertation.

Her Holiness Jagadguru Mata
Mahadevi
Chairman,
Viswakalyana Mission,
Bangalore

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Preface

Lingayathism is a religious ideology that became very popular during 12th century and is prevalent in parts of south India. Lingayathism has all the characteristics to be considered as a universal religion. The founder of this Faith is Basaveshwara. Lingayathism as a religious faith came as a kind of a reaction to the evil traditions, such as blind beliefs, claim of superiority for high caste Hindus, dividing human beings on caste and creed lines, gender inequality, untouchablity, improper distribution of public wealth, ill treatment to the people doing menial jobs and so on. Very important feature of this religion is its democratic style of functioning. Sri Basaveshwara, who can be rightfully described as the Father of Lingayath religion established Anubhava Mantapa a platform open for all members of the society to discuss about their spiritual and social issues. The presiding saint of the religious seat was Allama Phaprabhu, a great religious soul of the time. All the people of the society, irrespective of their caste, creed, religion, social status, economic status, participated in the discussions held in Anubhavamantapa. The proceedings of the Anubhava Mantapa were recorded in the form of Vachana literature, the new form of literature. These are typical Oath's written by various Sharanas and Sharanes based on their experience and knowledge. Vachanas provide very high moral and spiritual inspiration and crystal clear knowledge about supreme reality. However most of the Vachanakaras (writers of Vachana) were ordinary men involved in mundane activities. Vachana literature is the basic scripture of Lingayathism.

Earlier to the emergence of Lingayathism, there were many rituals practiced in out tradition-ridden society inflicting untold miseries on the people especially the people belonging to the lower class. Untouchability has spread its tentacles in such a way that no body was in a position to think about it. Working class who struggled for their livelihood were not only neglected but also exploited by the so called upper castes. Majority of the masses were not allowed to have spiritual and intellectual exposure, which was restricted only to the upper class and affluent few. In a tyrannical division of people under the garb of Varnashramadharma a hierarchical society was created dividing people into four categories. In this division majority of the population was

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dubbed into the last category of Shudra. Women were also considered as Shudra by birth itself. As per Varna system Brahmana is the highest, Kshatriya and, Vaishya coming next in respective order. Innumerable blind beliefs were knitted around these divisions to perpetrate exploitation of the least advantaged. Sri Basaveshwara turned the ladder of Varna into its opposite direction, where working class got first preference. Sri Basaveshwara removed all those divisions of Verna as irrational united the entire society into a unique community called Lingayath.

Sri Basaveshwara made Kayaka (Work is worship) mandatory to each and every human being. Without Kayaka no body has right to live. Sri Basaveshwara evolved a very significant ethics of Dasoha, i.e., voluntary contribution of the part of earning to the poor/society as every one's duty. It is often described that Hindu culture has power to resolve all the difficulties of humans' race. On perusing the history we find that India gave birth to maximum of religions which challenged this claim. All those religious faiths come into existence to over come difficult rituals of Hindu culture. Lingayathism is one such independent religion profound by Sri Basaveshwara in 12th Century based on scientific ethics, practically relevant for all times and places and most progressive in terms of human values. Sri Basaveshwara enriched Lingayathism by absorbing global humanitarian values in the 12th century itself which is astonishing. Lingayath religion is also a very unique religion founded to contend the false rituals. Lingayath religion is older than Sikhism, but it is very unfortunate that Lingayathism till to date considered as part of Hindu religion. This can be partly attributed to the lack of proper and sound understanding of the religious tenets of Lingayathism by its own followers and compartmentalisation of Lingayath religion into many sub-sects.

A treatise "Comparison of Lingayathism and Hinduism" penned by Sri Nagshetty K Shetkar is a very significant work in the direction of framing the thought process in the right earnest towards treating Lingayathism as an independent religion. He has worked very meticulously to bring out unique features of Lingayath religion. There is no doubt his work will throw new light on Lingayathism and will be an eye opener to many Lingayaths who are suffering with the conservative mindset. It is a kind

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of a ready reckoner for the study of Lingayath religion. This work is another mile stone to prove that Lingayath religion is an independent religion.

Common understanding that Lingayath religion is a part and parcel of Hindu religion is once again proved as not having any validity by this work. The author has collected scriptural evidences to prove his point and presented the same in a systematic way. He has utilised a plethora of religious, social and other relevant literature to bring authenticity to argument that Lingayathism is not only a unique religion, but also a religion worth claiming to be having all those human values which are universal in terms of time and place. For his work Dravidian University has awarded M. Phil degree, which he rightfully deserves. I congratulate his research supervisor Dr. D. Balaganapthi, Associate Professor of Comparative Dravidian Literature and Philosophy, in Dravidian University for his able guidance. I am of the opinion that this work is another jewel in the Treasure of Lingayath literature.

Dr. J. S. Patil

Vice Chancellor,

Karnataka State Law University, Hubli

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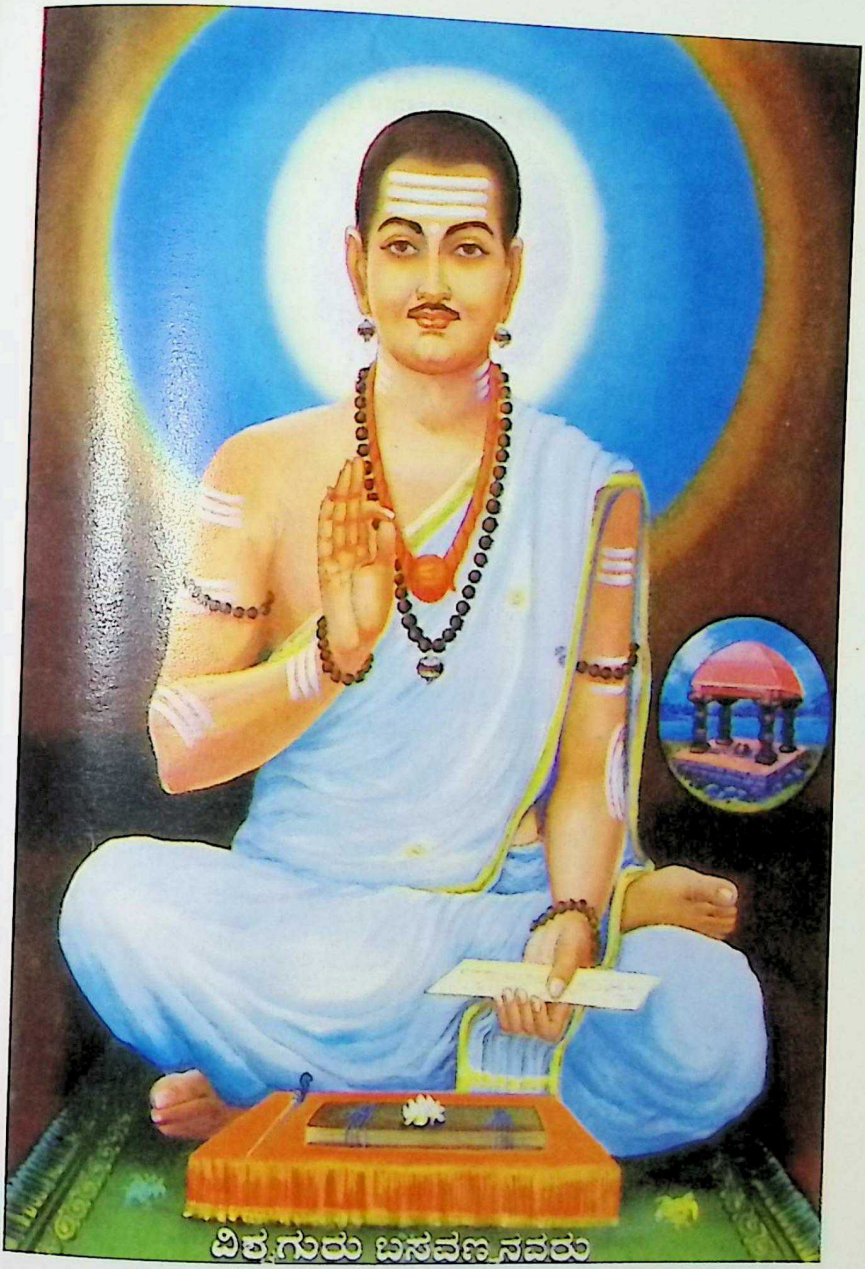

Founder of Lingayth Religion
Guru Basaveshwara (1133-1196)

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Donors

Kind hearted following persons provided financial assistace for publication of the book

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I must appreciate the great effort of Prof Virendra Simpi at the age of above 70 he took lot of strain of correcting dissertation made it to publish in the form of Book within short time and with great care.

I have indeed, no words to express my gratitude to my beloved mother Smt Shivaneelamma Shetkar, and my father Late Kanteppa Shetkar, (teacher), who is perennial and sole source of inspiration. I must sincerely thank my brothers Sangashetty K Shetkar, Mallikarjun Cheral, Shivashanker Cheral, Chandrashekhar Cheral. Sisters Naglingamma Shetkar, Rajeshwari Shetkar, and our entire family, the secret of virtuality. Who have been perpetual source of inspiration and assistance and whose whole-hearted help the present task could see light of the day.

Many others have helped me directly as well as indirectly, during the study period. **I specially remember personalities who oppose/Criticize my views and in turn graced me "strength of zeal".** Lack of space prevents me from thanking them individually by name. And all others have helped me directly or indirectly, to all of them I say thank you very much.

Nagshetty K Shetkar

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Upanishads, Vedic Gods, Sacrifice, *Brahman, Mantra;* Epics - The *Ramayana,* The *Mahabharata;*

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CONCLUSION

Glossary

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Annexure A: Articles Differentiating Lingayathism

Annexure B: Documentary Evidences clarifying Independence of Lingayathism

Annexure C: Interviews of Eminent Personalities

Annexure D: Letters Opposing independent recognition of Lingayathism

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ABBRIVATIONS

Sel V of S	Selected Vachana's of Sharanas edited by H.S.Shivprakash, O.L.Nagbhushanaswami, Pub: Basava Samiti, Bangalore. Collection of Vachan's of some Sharanas translated into English.
SVS	Samagra Vachana Samputa, a collection of Vachana wrote by various Sharanas/Sharnes Published in 15 editions, by Kannada Pustaka Pradhikar (Kannada Book Authority of Karnataka), Government of Karnataka, Bangalore.
SVS 6/58 /47	Samagra Vachana Samputa, a collection of Vachana wrote by various Sharanas/Sharnes Published in 15 editions, by Kannada Pustaka Pradhikar (Kannada Book Authority of Karnataka), Government of Karnataka, Bangalore. /6 number of edition. /58 Serial number of Vachana. /47 number of Vachana of an individual Sharana/Sharane in the edition.
V of A	Translated form of "Vachanas of Akkamahadevi". By Proff. Armendo Manenzes, S.M Angadi, Pub: Manohar Appasab Adake, Dharwad. 1973. /866 denote number of Vachana in the book.
V of B	Translated form of Vachana of Sri Basaveshvara taken from book "Vachanas of Basavanna" By: L M A Manzes, S M Angadi, Pub: Annana Balaga Sirigere, 1967. /866 denote number of Vachana in the book.
V of S	Translated form of Vachana of Sri Siddarameshwara taken from book "Vachanas of Siddarama" By: L M A Manzes, S M Angadi, Pub: Karnataka University Dharwad, 1978. /866 denote number of Vachana in the book.

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INTRODUCTION

India is the birth place of many religions. It also accommodated many religions which are born outside India. Hinduism and Lingayathism are two of the many religions which are born in India. The main objective of the present study is to critically compare these two religions. The comparative study clarifies certain ambiguities regarding their theories and highlights certain unique features which hold good for all times and people. Though there are many possible ways of attempting comparative study such as Historical and Anthropological, the present study limits itself to the comparison of the essential features of both the religions in terms of their religious practices and doctrines and social practices and inventions. The border objective of the comparative study is to find out solution to the contemporary problems of life relating to the two religions.

Hinduism is one of the few religions in the world which have survived since ancient times, inspite of regular on slaughts from within and outside. In fact, Hinduism is not one religion and one faith, but is a federation of different religious faiths and beliefs. It has drawn and is still drawing its spirit from the various sources such as Pre-Vedic, Non-Vedic and foreign faiths. In the words of Max Mullar 'This religion has room for almost every religion, nay it embraces them all.' In its all comprehensive nature, it contains all stages of social and religious evolution. It has stood for a principle of comprehensiveness and synthesis by which differences are reconciled as part of a common complex.

Lingayathism had its origin during the 12th century A.D. in the teachings of *Basaveshwara*. It opposed the existed socio-religious beliefs and practices which negatively affected the people of the time. The criticism levied is a constrictive criticism. It also provided the alternatives and solutions to the problems and gained acceptance among the masses. The origin of Lingayathism is often traced back to the Indus Valley Civilization where the depictions of the Proto Shiva, are available. Shiva in the form of *Linga* is worshipped by Lingayathism. Though Lingayathism has found its source from the problems of the socio-religious conditions of Hinduism.

Given that the comparative study is the main objective, the present study first identifies and elaborately discusses the essential features of both the religions. As is the case with any comparative study, it also, identifies and compares the similarities and differences of Hinduism and

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Lingayathism.

In order to compare, there should be two independent entities. Hence, whether Lingayathism has an independent status from Hinduism is an issue to be settled before further attempting the comparison.

Lingayathism has been playing a key role in the socio-cultural and political history of south India since its inception. It has the characteristic of a universal religion. Basaveshwara, the founder of the religion is a humanitarian and a universal preceptor. He established a unique kind of religion which is endowed with scientifically remarkable practices and it has the system with a universal frame work.

Even among the *Lingayaths* there is a doubt regarding the independent status of their religion. M. Chidanand Murthy (2000:4) and Srimadrambhapri Jagadguru (Hindu daily, dated 6th October 2006) argue that *Lingayath*ism is part of *Hinduism*. They believe that the *Lingayath*ism is not founded by *Guru* Basaveshwara, and *Istalinga,* unique symbolic representation of formless God, is nothing but Sthavara *Linga*. Motivated by the ideal of the integrated out look of Hinduism they opined that dividing Hinduism on the basis of various religious sects would affect the unity of the country negatively. Chidanand Murthy goes to the extent of arguing that establishing independent identification of Lingayathism is unfair and unlawful.

Reginald Edward Enthovan's work, based on historical literature and the information gathered from general public, states that though Lingayaths claim themselves to be a part of Hinduism, in reality, they are not. Enthovan used various important facts as evidence in support of his views such as population statistics, documentary evidences and stone sculptures. Here it is interesting to note that, according to Enthovan, some Lingayaths themselves claim that they are part of Hinduism. But the fact is far away from the truth. On the basis of the available evidences Enthovan argued that they are not part and parcel of Hinduism. However Chidanand Murthy criticized Enthovan's view as a part of the 'Divide and rule' policy of the British.

In contrast to the above view Bhimanna Khandre (Chidananda M, 2004:596-600) and Munavalli, S (2002:5) claim that *Veerashaivism* which is also known Lingayathism is an independent religion. K. R. Basavaraju, (2001:5), while arguing *Lingayath* and Veerashaiva are equivalent words is of the opinion that *Veerashaivism* was existent even before *Guru*

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Basaveshwara and he is only its reformer.

According to Chidand Murthy, *Lingayathism* is only a sect and it is absolutely a part and parcel of Hinduism (Chidananda, M, 2004:596-600). He make a mention of the Hindu Marriage Act (1955) according to which Lingayathism is a form of Hinduism and hence the Act is applicable to Lingayaths also. He uses this as a counter argument to get an independent constitutional status to *Lingayathism* (Chidananda, M, and 2004:535). Given the above confusions, to clarify the relation of Hinduism with the *Lingayathism* the present study brings to light the noble ethics, unique features and universalities of *Lingayathism.*

Systematic observation of *Vachana* Literature of Allama Prabhu, Chenna Basavanna, Madivala Machideva, Siddarameshwara, Akkamahadevi, Aaydakki Marayya & Lakkamma, Molige Marayya and many others gave documentary evidence about the founder of religion, inventor of *Istalinga*, counter action against *Hinduism*, misfortune of Veerashaivas and so on. Moral ethical tenets in the form of *Vachana* were created on the basis of experience and knowledge by various Sharana/Sharanes to nourish *Lingayathism*. *Vachana* literature is used as a primary reference material for Lingayathism. *Vachanas* are taken from *Samgara Vachana Samputa* (SVS). In modern literature Sakhare, M. R (2004), Mate Mahadevi (1998) and Hiremalluru. K. Eshawaran (1997) provided sufficient evidence to clarify the above issue. J.S. Patil (2005) also gave sufficient supporting evidences regarding multifaceted reforms and independent status of *Lingayathism*.

Making critical evaluation about practices of the *Lingayathism* and Hinduism, I wish to explore the present position and firmness of followers of the religion and righteousness of practices as per their scriptures. To notice the ethics of both the religions this endeavor leads to study essentialities of both the religions and compare similarities, qualities and general comments about both the religions.

Hinduism is said to be one of oldest religions surviving even now. What are those essential features, on the basis of which it is being practiced, the characteristics and various specialties of the Hinduism will be elaborated in Chapter one. The roots of Hinduism are discussed in accordance with Indus Valley civilization, Vedic, Non-Vedic culture, religious and social ethics preached through Epics. Different divisions and aspects of the *Veda* such as *Samhita, Brahamanas, Aranyakas, Upanishads,*

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Vedic gods, Sacrifice, Brahman and Mantra are discussed. The importance of Epics the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, which contain the every day practical moral philosophy, will be scrutinized. Four fold discrimination of Caste system, four fold distinction of stages of life (Chaturvarna system) along with four fold distinction of objects of life will be discussed to have an idea of how meaningfully the life of human beings is characterized in Hinduism. How Karma Siddhanta provides an answer to the problems of suffering and inequalities by way of three fold division of Sanchita, Agami and Prarabdha Karmas will be discussed. The ways of salvation through various Yogas will be discussed in terms of Raja *Yoga*, *Karma Yoga*, *Bhakti* Yoga and *Jnana* Yoga.

Lingayathism is conceived to be a world religion, by its founder Basaveshwara. He possessed a multifaceted personality. On the basis of his wider and indepth understanding of life, he attempted to establish an egalitarian society. Chapter II attempts to discuss the essential features of Lingayathism. Often Lingayathism is confounded with Veerashaivism. Individual characteristics of Lingayathism and Veerashaivism, will be discussed to clarify the misconceptions developed regarding both. Being a house holder Basaveshwara attained over all heights in accordance with worldly, spiritually, socially and economically all aspects of life. Evidences available to establish Basaveshwara as the founder of Lingayathism are discussed. The life and works of Basaveshwara will be discussed to bring out the need for the establishment of a new religious faith during those times.

Essential features on which the Lingayathism was founded; served the commons, survived with great force, and attracted the people from all the sections will be discussed. The philosophy of *Shativishishatadvaita*, which is propagated after reforming the *Shaivism* by adding many new dimensions, will be elaborately discussed. Following a detailed discussion on *Ashtavaranas* (Coverings) which protect the life of a *Lingayath* such as *Guru*, *Linga*, *Jangama*, *Vibhuti*, *Rudraksi*, Mantra, *Padodaka* and *Prasada*, five moral codes that govern the life of the Lingayath such as *Shivachara*, *Lingachara, Sadachara, Bhrutyachara* and *Ganachara* are explained as the bases of social system. Six stages of spiritual ascension namely *Bhakta, Mahesha, Prasadi, Pranalingi, Sharana* and *Aikya,* are identified in Lingayathism, in which one can achieve any stage at any time. Difference between *Sthavaralinga* and Istalinga are specified.

Lingayathism presents reformative remedies to the social evils of the contemporary society. Basaveshwara invented a weapon called '*Kayaka*

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and *Dashooha'* by using which he turned Kalyana city towards prosperity; in which "there is nobody to ask (beg) for survival; and everybody is capable to give." Basaveshwara established the first Parliament of the world called *Anubhava Mantapa* through which he built welfare state of equality, fraternity, liberty, and all round welfare of the living beings. The role of *Anubhava Mantapa* and its influence and significance are discussed. Basaveshwara's aim to eradicate social inequalities with the invention of various social systems such as *Kayaka* and *Dashooha* is elaborated in this chapter.

The chapter IV compares the doctrines and practices of Hinduism and Lingayathism. Initially, it points out the similarities between the two religions. Karma *Siddhanata* and rebirth which determine the past, present and future of the life of the individual are the doctrines which are accepted equally by both religions. *Omkar* as the first principle of manifestation and Soul as the spiritual and eternal entity are the other concepts which are also accepted by both the religions. Both rejected with equal fervor two evils of marriage system such as polygamy and polyandry. Further, Lingayathism accepted the *Arishadvargas* identified by Hinduism as the enemies of human life. However, the former differed from the later in arguing that *Shadvargas* can be utilized positively.

Following the discussion on the similarities, the chapter also compares certain doctrines with regard to which both Hinduism and Lingayathism that radically deviate from each other. Shaktivishishtadvaita as a far more reformed and developed version of *Vedantic* school of Hinduism; and richness of Vachana literature in criticizing and propounding alternatives to the existent problems of the Hinduism will be discussed elaborately. Dashooha as a more advanced form of Dana; Deekshe as a more refined and egalitarian form of initiation, than Upanayana will be presented systematically. Along with this Casteist attitude of Hinduism is compared with socialistic fervor of Lingayathism followed by different aspects of worship as practiced in both religions.

Conclusion presents the findings of the comparative study of the two religions regarding the relevance of the doctrines of the both religions to the contemporary times, and the status of Lingayathism. It is concluded that, though present day Lingayathism has some problems with regard to practice and faith, the core of Lingayathism has unique features which can establish it to be a Universal religion.

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CHAPTER - I

ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF HINDUISM

This chapter discusses the essential features of Hinduism such as *Chatur Varnas, Chatur Ashrama*, Law of *Karma*, *Purusharthas* and *Yoga*. It traces out theses features from the roots that are available in the Indus valley civilization, Vedic culture and Epics of Hinduism.

The religious tradition we call 'Hinduism' is the product of nearly 5,000 years of continuous development. It has no founder and no prophet. Being one of the oldest of the world's great living religions, it has several origins or roots from different races of people. Followed by nearly 80% of the roughly 700 million people of India, Hinduism is actually a collection of an incredible variety of sects and cults; from primitive forms of animism to the highest reaches of mysticism and philosophy. Many of the sects and cults seem to have distinct religious practices. Yet all have a family relationship since they all spring from certain common traditions and thrive on conditions peculiar to India.

Hindu is a Persian word for Indian. It is the name by which the Persian and the Greek invaders of India (600BC-300.BC) designated the people of this country. The progress of these invaders towards this country usually stopped short at the Indus or the Sindhu River. So they called this country "the land of the Sindhu or Hindu". Since the Persians pronounced the letter 'S' as 'H' so all the old Persian epigraphs called India as Hindu. The Muslim invaders of India since 1000A.D. called this land 'Hindustan', which was popularized by the British, who later changed it as India. But the people of India were Hindus for them too; this term 'Hindu' being foreign, is nowhere found in the Indian scriptures and other literature. The Indian tradition prefers to speak of this religious tradition as *Sanatana Dharma* or 'Eternal law' which indicates the revelatory character of the beliefs to which the 'Hindu' tradition is committed. "Hinduism" is more a culture than a creed and more a way of life than a religion founded by a prophet.

The prominent feature of Hinduism is its infinite variety. This is due to two major causes: i) the vastness of this country and the diversity of her physical features, and ii) the diversity of races that settled in this land, which made this country an "ethnological museum". Six races in India are recognized the Negrito, the Proto-Australoid, the Mongoloid, the Mediterranean and the Indo-Europeans (Western Brachycephels). As a result, Hinduism embraces a wide diversity of religious beliefs. Some worship *Shiva*, others *Vishnu*, or his incarnations; yet others a Mother

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goddess and so on. The individual Hindu may pay reverence to one god, or a few gods, or many Gods or none at all.

Thus for an alien, the name 'Hinduism' is an umbrella term which does not demand a total homogeneity. Some scholars point out that Hinduism is a "federation of cults and customs, a collage of ideas and spiritual aspiration". It embraces a "family of religious beliefs".

Roots of Hinduism

The sources of Hinduism are generally divided into two. The *Vedic* and the *Non-Vedic*. The *Vedic* origin belongs to the invading *Aryans* since 2000BC. The *Non-Vedic* tradition is divided into two-the *Pre-Vedic* and the *Post-Vedic*. The religion of the Indus valley civilization is the major *Pre-Vedic* source. Many post Non-*Vedic* influences like Buddhism and Jainism too shaped Hinduism. The religious beliefs and practices of the people of the Indus valley, of the people of other parts of India, before and after the *Aryan* invasion, constitute major roots of Hinduism. All these mingled to form two different streams of Hinduism. One is called the classical Hinduism or the *Brhamanical* Hinduism and the other is called folk Hinduism or popular Hinduism. Some scholars call the former Great tradition and the latter the little tradition. Buddhism and Jainism also form part of the Great tradition.

A major source of non *Vedic* roots of Hinduism is the Indus Valley civilization which is still presented in the *Sloka* form of the country. Vedic culture followed by epics and *Puranas* forms a part of the major source of *Brahmanical* Hinduism. Let us discus the salient features of both the traditions in which present day Hinduism is rooted.

The Indus Valley Civilization

In 1990, archeological excavations carried out at Mohenjodaro in Sindh and Harappa in the Punjab brought to light the vestigates of a highly developed urban civilization which is 5000 years old. This carried back the antiquity of Indian History and that of the origin of Hinduism to nearly 2500BC. This was the period that witnessed the growth of two other civilizations, Egypt and Sumeria. There are good reasons to believe that the religion of the Indus people is an important source for determining the roots of Hinduism.

Shiva/Proto Shiva

Let us discuss some of the relevant and significant religions and cultural aspects of the Indus Valley Civilization. Some scholars trace the origin of *Shiva* and *Linga* worship to the Harappan civilization. One of the seals from Mohenjodaro has the figure of a three faced man of god with horned head

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dress. He is seated in a *Yoga* posture and surrounded by wild animals, an elephant, a tiger, a rhinoceros and a buffalo. The body of this *Yogi* is nude, except for many bangles and necklaces. He is sithyphalic, which indicates that he is a fertility god. His face has a fierce ugerish aspect. The figure assumed as "Proto-Shiva". Certainly the honored God has much in common with the Shiva of later Hinduism, called *Pashupati*.

The repeated depictions of bull on the seals that too showing it as standing before a cult object make us believe that bull was sacred animal to the Harappans. the bull or *Nandi* is specially associated with God *Siva* as his vehicle. However, in the Harappan civilization this bull does not seem to have been connected with the Proto-*Shiva*. Bull doesn't figure among the animals surrounding the God or proto-*Shiva*. Further, the horns of the "Proto-*Shiva*" are not those of an ox but of a buffalo. Similarly, the cow, so revered in later Hinduism, is nowhere depicted.

It is suggested that *Shiva's* emblem of trident has its origin in the horned head-dress of 'Proto-*Shiva*'. The identification of the male God with *Shiva* is further strengthened by the discovery of many conical and cylindrical stone pieces in the Harappan civilization. Many scholars think that these stone pieces represent *Shivalinga*.

The Cult of Mother Goddess

Excavations at Indus sites have yielded many terracotta figures of standing, semi-nude figures. Most of them have girdles around their loins, abundant jewellary and fan-shaped head dresses. Scholars view that these represent a mother Goddess. Probably they are the forerunners of the cult of the divine mother, which forms an important part of later Hinduism and which has the female energy as the source of all creation. This belief in the female *Shakti* is stressed by the *Devi Mahatmya* section of *Markhandeya Purana*.

As some of the excavated tetta-cotta figures of the 'Mother-goddess' mentioned above are smoke-stained, scholars view that the custom of burning oil lamp or incense before the Goddess was a popular practice not only in modern Hinduism, but also in the Harappan age. These figures may be the earliest Dipa Laxmis known to the Hindu religion.

Tree worship

The tree worship that forms a part of modern Hinduism can also be traced back to the Harappan culture. On many seals we have the representation of trees and leave especially the papal leave.

In one of the seals discovered at Harappa, we see a plant emerging

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from the womb of a women seated on the ground with hands raised in supplication. This seems to depict the custom of human sacrifice before the deity.

Yet another seal represents a female figure, probably a Mother goddess, standing in the bifurcated branch of a papal tree. A worshipper brings a goat for sacrifice which is being presented by many people in a standing position. This custom of sacrificing goats to Gods and goddesses still forms a part of folk Hinduism.

Snake worship

In Harappa culture, snake appears on painted pottery. A clay amulet depicts a snake before a low stool. A tablet shows a seated deity with a hooded snake serving as a canopy over its head. All these indicate the prevalence of snake (*naga*) worship in the Harappan culture.

Demons or demi-Gods

A seal depicts a horned human figure, with the feet and tail of a bull, struggling against a horned tiger. This man-bull appears to be a demigod or demon. Some scholars see in this struggle the fore bear of a demon constantly battling against the gods, which is a major theme in almost all *Puranas* of the Hinduism. Some see the proto-*Devi* of proto-*Shiva* in the tiger. In later Hinduism, *Shiva* has a proto-form of Mahishasura in the man-bull and either tigers hide as his garment and *Devi* has a tiger as her vehicle.

Ceremonial ablutions

It is well known that ceremonial ablutions with water form an important feature of Hinduism. This practice can also be traced back to the Harappan civilization. The Great Bath at Mohenjodaro is about 56 meters long and 34 meters wide and it has six entrances. All these elaborate arrangements for bathing seem to indicate that ceremonial ablutions formed a feature of the Harappan religion.

Amulets

We have many clay and copper amulets from the Harappan civilization. These people probably believed in the magical potency of the amulets and wore them to ward off the evils. Several legends taken from the episodes of various deities are engraved on these amulets. Many amulets have Swastika engraved on them. Probably these people thought that it was a lucky sign.

Vedas

The *Vedas* are the earlier available sources of literature to understand

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the religion and philosophy of Hindus. Being derived from the root '*Ved*' to know, the word *Veda* means knowledge. The *Vedas*, also known as *Sruti* (that which is heard) constitute a prodigious body of literature, originally oral in character. There are four *Vedas. Rig, Yajur, Sama* and *Atharva Veda.* Each *Veda* has four sections called the *Samhitas* (1500-1000B.C), the *Brahmans* (900B.C), the *Aranyakas* (800-700 B.C) and the *Upanishads* (700-500B.C.). These texts are great in length and very varied in content. Out of the vast literary production of *Vedism*, only a part has survived, but this part is sufficient for understanding the nature of the whole. The massive *Brahmans*, which are looked on as appendices to the Samhitas (the core of *Vedas*), and the mystical *Aranyakas* and *Upanishads*, which are in turn appendices to the *Brahmans*, complete the literature generally known as *Vedic*.

Samhitas

The *Samhitas* (Collection of prayers) being the earliest in time are the core of the *Vedic* literature. They are four in number, *Rig Veda Samhita, Yajur Veda Samhita, Sama Veda Samhita* and *Atharva Veda Samhita.* These *Samihitas* consist of "Songs of praise and invocation"; composed to meet the various needs of a complex religious system, mostly practical. These songs imply the existence of many mythological legends even before the composition of the *Rig Veda*. So, some scholars point out that the basic beliefs of the *Vedic* religion go back to the period when the *Aryans* lived in Iran.

The poets who composed this *Vedic* hymns are considered as great sages (Rishis) and these hymns are considered to have great magic potency. These sages worshipped the various phenomena of nature and personified them in their songs. To these personified Natural forces, called *Devas*, these sages offered sacrifices so that they would give in return all prosperity, like rain, wealth in cattle and in sons, health, in long life and finally safe escort to the kingdom of death ruled by *Yama*, the son of Vivasvan.

The *Veda* Rishis thought that the Gods were pleased with the material gift accompanied by *Vedic* hymns of praise that extolled the might of gods. These hymns were carefully handed down by word of mouth. Around 800-600 B.C. these hymns were collected and arranged. Even when the art of writing was widely known in India these hymns were rarely written. However, even after 3000 years that they have survived to the present day in their original form, without being tempered, thanks to the brilliant feats of memory of many generation of *Vedic* chanters. These hymns are still recited at weddings and funerals, and in the daily recitings of the *Brahmins*.

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We have much knowledge of the religion of the early *Aryans* from the *Rig Veda Samhita*, which contains 1028 hymns. These are the oldest religious hymns in the world still looked on as sacred. The *Rig Veda* means the "*Veda* of verses". They are mostly poetic prayers addressed to *Agni, Indra, Varuna* and so on. The *Yajur Veda* (the *Veda* of sacrificial formulas) contains verses and prose formulas applicable to different rites. The *Sama Veda* (the *Veda* of chants) is made up of selection of verses drawn almost wholly from the rig *Veda*. They are set to musical notation and intended as an aid to the performance of sacred rituals. The *Atharva Veda,* containing many non-*Aryan* elements of single animism and magical spells, is considered to be of less worthy than the three other *Vedas*.

Brahmanas

Each *Veda* has a *Brahmana* section. These prose texts are commentaries to the *Samhitas.* They are compiled separately for the various *Vedas*. They serve to interpret the mantras (hymns) of their ritual.

Aranyakas

Composed around 800B.C. Aranyakas started questioning the excessive ritualism of the *Vedic* sacrifice. Such rumblings can be detected as early as the Rig. *Veda* in which the merit of their sacrifice was questioned and the plurality of gods was doubted. This sceptic voice also questioned the existence of Indra. The great genius of the age accommodated the free thinking too and in the *Aranyakas* they gave a symbolic interpretation to the mantras and the rituals. Thus the *Aranyakas* are books dealing with the mysticism and symbolism of the sacrifice. They prescribed meditations rather than sacrificial ritual. These *Aranyakas* became ideal text-books for the forest-hermit. So purely ritualistic passages are to be found in them only casually. They were studied in the forest, away from the community; hence they came to be called the *Aranyakas* or the 'Forest texts'.

Upanishads

The *Upanishads* composed mostly around 600B.C. in the form of a dialogue constitute the culmination of *Vedism.* They favor the egoistic way of knowledge in opposition to the rituals and pleadings with the gods. These short texts summarizing the speculative thought of the age were more concerned with the discovery of the ground of the universe, the ultimate reality (the *Brahman*). They were also concerned with the nature of human consciousness. They concluded that the timeless Brahman is the same as the individual self of *Atman.* Their teachings are mostly through parables or similes. The basic *Upanishads* are thirteen in number. The rest of them (about100) belonged to the Post Vedic period.

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Vedic Gods

The *Aryans* were on the fringes of civilization with an elaborated poetry and an advanced military technique. They were a wild, turbulent people and had few of the taboos of later India. These *Aryans* were the indo European stock of which the Iranians, Greeks, Romans, Germans, slaves and Celts also belonged. The great father God of the Indo-European was the personified *Heavenszues* in Greek, Jupitar in Latin and Dyaus in the *Vedas.* However, by the time the *Aryans* entered India, and their religion has developed far from the old Indo European faith. To the Indo-*Aryans* of the *Vedic* period, Indra was the greatest God. He had a dual function. He was the greatest war-God and the weather God. Like the Greek Zeus and the Germany Thor, the *Vedic Indra* wielded a thunderbolt (*Vajra*), with which he destroyed his enemies. With it heslew the evil dragon *Vritra* held back the water and caused famine on earth. Thus Indra brought rain to the parched land.

The *Vedic Aryans* also prayed to the *Surya* (Sun God) *Agni* (Fire-god), and *Varuna* the guardian of *Rta*, the cosmic order. This concept of *Rta* is the highest flight of *Rig. Vedic* thought. Whereas all the other *Vedic* Gods are lively and cheerful, *Varuna* is pure and awesome. So the worshippers approached *Varuna* with a sense of fear. Mere performance of sacrifice would not ensure his favor for he abhorred any violation of *Rta* which is sin. He loathed evil deeds prompted by drink, gambling, anger and the influence of wicked men. So when the cheerful *Vedic* priest sings to *Varuna*, he often puts on sack-cloth and ashes, and prays with fear and humbling. *Varuna* punishes the sinners, like the Jeweh of the Old Testament. The hymn to *Varuna* reminds us of the potential psalms of the Old Testament.

Rudra was an archer God, whose arrows brought disease. Like Indra, he was associated with the storm. But he lacked Indra's popular and genial character. He dwelt in remote mountains and was generally an object of fear. He was invoked to ward off his arrows of plague and disaster. However, he had a beneficent aspect too. He was the guardian of the healing herbs.

Agni, the fire God was the God of the priests. As *Varuna* and the concept of *Rta* associated with him led to the *Vedic* ethics, *Agni* and his presence everywhere paved way for speculation leading to the *Rig Vedic* mysticism. *Agni,* the God of the home dwelt in the domestic heart, in the fire altar: and he was the intermediary between gods and men, because he carried the sacrifice to the gods. He dwelt in the waters of heaven in the form of lightning and on earth in many forms. He is hidden in the five sticks. In fact he is here, there and everywhere. Is there only one *Agni*, or are there

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many *Agni*'s? How could he be one and many at the same time? Such questions in the *Rig Veda* show the earliest signs of the tendency towards monism, which was to bear fruit in the *Upanishads*.

Sacrifice

Sacrifice at the fire altar was the centre of the *Vedic* cult. Many scarifices were made in order to obtain boons from the *Devas* or gods. These Gods gladly responded to the call of the priests through the hymns, descended on earth, drank and ate with the worshippers, and duly rewarded them with plenitude, victory in war, progeny, long life, increase of cattle and so on. Men and *Devas* lived on a *quid pro quo* basis. Except the solemn *Varuna* and the grim and unpredictable Rudra, all the *Vedic* Gods were good natured. Guilt offerings and thanks offerings, of the kind offered by the ancient Hebrews, are almost unheard of in the *Veda*.

In the later part of the Rig *Veda* it was believed that the universe itself arose from a primeval sacrifice by *Purusha*, the God. He sacrificed himself unto himself. This led to the mystical identification God, victim and sacrificer. Since then sacrifice began to attain an even greater importance in the scheme of things. Henceforth by every sacrifice the priest was reenacting the primeval sacrifice of the Purusha, and the world enacting the primeval sacrifice of the Purusha, and the world was born anew. It was also believed that without regular sacrifices all cosmic process would cease and chaos would come again.

Brahman

In the *Rig Veda* we often come across a mysterious entity called *Brahman*, which means the magical power of the sacred mantras (utterances). This is more or less like the supernatural power known in the religious anthropology as Mana. The priest, who alone knew the formula (Mantras) whereby to bring the Gods to the sacrifice, were supposed to be masters of this great mysterious power. So the possessor of *Brahman*a came to be called *Brahman*a, the *Vedic* priest.

Mantra

The entire *Vedic* formulate (Mantras) were believed to have magical power. The metres used in the *Veda* were also thought of as gods. Among them the mantra "Gayatri" is supposed to have the greatest magical power. Later the syllable OM came to be considered as particularly holy and to contain the essence of the *Vedas* and is pregnant with the utmost 'power' and mystery.

All these *Vedic* speculations (about Rta, *Agni*'s omnipresence, the

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concept of *Brahman* etc.) ultimately led to the development of Gnostic monistic and ascetic trend in the *Upanishads*.

Epics

There are two Epics which have predominantly influenced the thought and the life of Hindus. They are the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. *Ramayana* discusses ideal personality of an individual, whereas the *Mahabharata* guides social and political life of human beings. The Ramayana and the *Mahabharata* are called the *Itihasas* (historic narratives) A study of them, together with the *Puranas*, are supposed to be necessary for the correct interpretation of the *Vedas*. It is true that for over 2000 years these *Itihasas* have been influencing the religious and moral thought of India.

The origins of these two *Itihasas* are traced to the *Vedas*. The *Brahmanas* of the *Vedas* contain certain "songs of praise of men" and heroic legends. Recital of them was considered an essential part of the *Vedic* sacrificial rituals. These *Gathas* gradually were developed into lengthy ballads. Whereas the transmission of the mantras of the Samhitas was confined to *Brahmin* priests, that of the heroic ballads was taken up by certain professional non-*Brahmanic* bards (the *sudras*), who popularized them among the masses. Thus the mantras of the *Brahmins* were praises of the deities, including sacrificial details and high philosophical speculations. The *Itihasas* (heroic ballads and legends) dealt with the great deeds of kings and heroes. They also described war and practical philosophy and ethics.

The Ramayana

Sage Valmiki, author of the Ramayana, collected the floating mass of the Rama story prevalent in his time and composed an ornate work. In its present form it comprises of seven books (1) *Bala kandam, 2) Ayodhya kandam, 3) Kiskinda kandam, 4) Sundara kandam, 5) Yudda kandam, and 6)Uttara kandam)* and contains 24,000 stanzas.

Adi Sankara (800A. D) In his *Atmabodha* elucidates the allegorical significance of this epic. He said the soul of (Rama) after crossing the ocean of *Moha* (delusion) destroyed the demons (passions like hatred etc) and regained Shanti (peace) in the form of Sita. Inspite of all the allegorical explanations, the internal evidences only show that Valmiki wanted to portray the ideal life of an ideal man, and so wrote the Ramayana. In Rama we get an ideal son, in Lakshmana and Bharata ideal brothers, and in Sita an ideal wife. Rama stands for duty and self-sacrifice, compassion and protection. This epic stresses the importance of moral values. Later this ideal man Rama came to be regarded as an incarnation of *Vishnu*. This led to

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the inclusion of a lot of additional matter and many supernatural elements into the Ramayana. Several *Puranic* legends were interpolated into it. All these increased the bulk of book. Anyway, the thrust on moral values elevated the Ramayana as a sacred text teaching righteousness. So the Indians equate it with *Dharma Shastra*.

The Ramayana also deals with war, diplomacy, administration and other topics which fall within the domain of the *Arth-shastra*. This epic is a *Niti Shastra* (ethical work) since it warns mankind of the disastrous effects of moral lapses. Dasharata dotted on his young wife Kaikeyi. This resulted in great disaster not only to him but also to the kingdom. Ravana, inspite of his great valor administrative acumen and erudition had a weakness for women which destroyed him and those who were dear and near to him.

The Ramayana gives a many-sided nature of perfect life and its rewards Rama, inspite of his young age, was honored by all the sages in the forest. The sages who embarked on a life of severe discipline found a towering moral personality in Rama. So they praised him as the special manifestation of the Lord for the protection of righteousness.

Valmiki depicts an ideal kingdom of Kosla and an ideal capital in Ayodhya. The entire kingdom had attained a high level of prosperity. The people were highly virtuous. The king and the officers practiced virtues and were themselves models in raising the cultural level of the subjects. Valmiki says there was neither illiterate in that country nor wicked. The author repeatedly points out that the king's personality was the mainspring of all peace, prosperity and progress of the kingdom.

Hanuman is faithful, devoted, mighty and intelligent. He is blessed with long life. In the very first meeting he impressed Rama so much that Rama told Lakshmana that none can speak thus without mastering the *Vedas*. Rama's character captivated the heart of Hanuman so much that he decided to serve Rama. He also chose him as the spiritual ideal. He held Rama's name as a Mantra, which gave him enormous moments of tremendous energy during moments of crisis. Hanuman succeeds in all his efforts and firmly believed that it was the chanting of "*Rama Nam*" (Rama's name) that was the secret of all his success. Hence he proudly declared in Lanka that "I am the servant of Rama and a thousand Ravanas cannot cope with me in battle". Hanuman was a perfect *Brahmachari* (Celibate). So while searching for Sita in Lanka he became very much uneasy to see so many ladies sleeping in the harem of Ravana. So he carried on vigorous introspection and concluded that though mere eyes had to see them all, my mind was not touched. Mind is the cause of all sins".

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Valmiki shows Sita as the embodiment of a virtuous wife. When Rama was leaving for the forest, she felt it would be wrong on her part to stay behind in the palace. She told Rama, "I have been taught by my parents to follow my husband in all conditions of life. I shall carry out that lesson now". Throughout her life her guiding principles were the happiness of Rama and the maintenance of his reputation.

The Ramayana has been a source of inspiration to many people. This work has been translated into almost all the major regional languages of India by very eminent poets. Some later poets have given an elaborate treatment of particular episodes. It inspired many painters and sculptors all over India to draw their themes from the Ramayana. During the medieval period many temples were built in honor of Rama. The exposition of this epic is a universal phenomenon in all the nooks and corners of India. After days of strenuous work villagers gather in the evenings to listen to such exposition or discourses till in the late night. Men of all ages, women and children listen to this story and try to imbibe the principle of *Dharma* as the ancient sages conceived it. There is no doubt that the characters of Rama, Lakshmana, Sita and Hanuman have shaped the lives of many millions over the centuries.

The Mahabharata

The *Mahabharata* is not the composition of a single author, nor was it written in one generation. *The* core story may belong to 600 B.C. having prevailed as a ballad orally transmitted for a few centuries. It seems to have reached its final stage around 400 A.D. Thus this great epic is the outcome of a long and continuous literary activity over ten centuries.

The Mahabharata deals with the great deeds of kings and heroes, wars, practical philosophy and ethics. It was sung by the priests as an essential part of the *Vedic* ritual, later sung in assemblies by wandering bards called the Sutas. Thus the earliest Indian literature of a fundamentally secular character is found in this great epic. It had its origin in martial legends. Later it was worked over by a succession of editors, who interpolated many long passages on theology, morals and statecraft.

The *Mahabharata* is divided into 18 Parvas of unequal length. *Shanti Parva* is the biggest with nearly 14,525 stanzas and the *Maha Prasathanika Parva* the 17th *Parva* is the smallest one with 120 stanzas. The language of this epic is simple and dignified and metres of its stanzas are also simple. The whole work has a moral objective; which is the propagation of the external law, covering the four human values of *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama*, and *Moksha*, which means righteousness, wealth, love and salvation respectively.

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This editor is the traditionally respected *Vyasa*, also known as *Krishna Dvaipayana*. He introduces himself into the epic and says he is the son of sage Parasara and Satyavati. He establishes a close relationship between himself and the heroes of the epic by claiming to be the procreate of Dhrutarashtra and Pandu on childless widows *Amba* and *Ambalika* by levirate. The tradition holds that after performing penance, *Vyasa* composed the Bharata of 24,000 verses and taught it to his son *Suka* and to one of his promising students namely *Vaisampayana.* This *Vaisampayana* recited it at a great "snake sacrifice" performed by *Janamejaya.* A *Suta* (bard) who heard it from *Vaisampayana* went to the *Naimisha* forest and recited the epic for the sages assembled there.

The Great War between the hundred sons of Dhratarashtra and five of Pandu for the throne of Hastinapura is the central theme of this epic. To this, many other matters were added such as 1) many legends of the wandering bards 2) myths and legends of *Brahman*ic origin stressing the superiority of the *Brahmins* 3) cosmological, genealogical and geographical matter 4) local myths 5) Myths of *Vishnu Shiva* and skanda 6) many moral stories 7) law ethics and 8) philosophical and ascetic poetry.

All these additions, especially law and ethics, made this epic a *Dharma-Shastra* par excellence. The *"Shanti Parva" "Anushasana Parva"* deals with *Dharma* in its wider concept. These sections explain the *Raja-Dharma* (the duties of the king), *Pitru Dharma* (the duties of the parents), *Putra Dharma* (duties of the children) *Dharma Apad* (duties of all during crisis), *Moksha-Dharma* (salvation) *Dana-Dharma* (liberty) and soon.

The Raja *Dharma* sections elaborate the *Artha Shastra* (the art of the statecraft-taxation, army, foreign relation, etc). The many didactic episodes and ethical instructions of this epic make it a *Niti-shastra* (ethical work). The inclusion of the Bhagavad-Gita makes it a fountain head of Indian philosophy or *Moksha-Shastra*. These philosophical tracts make this epic a manual of the philosophies like *Sankhya, Yoga* and *Vedanta;* religious cults like *Shaivism*. *Vaishnavism* and *Shaktism*, and of *Bhakti*, *Karma* and *Jnana*.

Thus the Mahabharata becomes an encyclopedia of Indian culture more important than its range, its depth of meaning, and consequently its capacity to synthesize different schools and view points into a unitary whole.

All great works of art and literature have an inner and deeper meaning than what meets the eye. Scholars have pointed out the three-dimensional meaning of this epic-the historical meaning the ethical meaning and the transcendental meaning in the meta-physical plane.

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On the historical or mundane plane the story deals with the fratricidal (killing of bothers) war of annihilation. On the ethical plane, this war is a conflict between the principles of *Dharma* and *Adharma*, between justice and injustice or between good and evil. in the plane the warrior parties are regarded as the incarnations of *Devas* and *Asuras*. Yudhistra of *Yama Dharma Raja*, Bhima of *Vayu*, Arjuna of *Indra*, and the Nakula and Sahdeva of *Asvins*, the celestial twins. The war ends in the victory of *Dharma*.

The transcendental plane takes it beyond *Dharma* and *Adharma*. In this plane, Kurukshetra a perpetual battle between the 'higher self' and the 'lower self' of man for the mastery over mind and body. The two-selves are symbolized as cousins. When man has the guidance of the super-self (Krishna), he emerges successful in this conflict. When Arjuna, the man resorts to the sword or arrow of knowledge, he destroys all his unwanted desires and passions symbolized by his relatives, teachers, elders and friends all ranged against him. In this metaphysical or transcendental plane Arjuna is the *Jivatma* (the individual self) and Lord Krishna is the *Paramatma* (the super-self) and *Dhrutarashtra* is the symbol of the veil ego centric self. The ego is shown as blindness. Vidura stands for Buddhi or the one-pointed reason, and Bhisma for tradition, the time bound elements in human life and society.

If these various planes of meaning transform this epic in to a great master piece, its capacity to synthesize varying conflicting schools of philosophy and religious cults elevate it still further as an unparalleled work in world literature. It is because of these qualities that Indian tradition considers the work as the fifth Veda. Outweighing the four earlier *Vedas*. Further it is said to be a *Veda* for all people, irrespective of caste, creed, and sex. The other four *Vedas* closed their doors to women and *Sudras*.

The Mahabharata is a veritable treasure-house of Indian lore, both secular and religious. It has been an authoritative book of law, morality and philosophy. It has laid down rules for the attainment of *Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kama* called the *Trivarga* in the Indian tradition. It shows that a great seer like (*Vyasa*) and an ideal fighter like (Arjuna) are supermen (Nara) and they can become close associates of god (Narayana). This epic combines in it the *Aryan* and the non-*Aryan* elements of mythology and thus lays the foundation for the Hindu religion. Its mythology stands just midway between the *Vedic* and later Puranic mythology. In this epic we see men and gods acting together, at times leading to a fight between a man and a god. The fight of Arjuna with *Shiva* in the guise of a hunter *(Kirata)* is found in this

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epic. A human being like *Agasthya* curses Nahusha in heaven. Gods marry at times human beings and beget children mysteriously. The birth of the Pandavas is a case in point. Similarly a king marries the river Ganga and begets children. In this epic we also see the mighty *Vedic* gods pushed back to a secondary level of the eight *Dikpalakas* (guardians of the eight quarters) and gods like *Shiva* and *Vishnu* emerging as powerful gods. It not only depicts the sectarian rivallary between the followers of *Shiva* and *Vishnu*, but also proclaims the identity of *Vishnu* and *Shiva*.

In it *Shaivism* and *Vaishnavism* emerge as two great sects. Both of them arose out of the religious notions and belief of the Dravidian and the *Aryan*. Both these sects easily assimilated the lore of the many tribes of India. The Mahabharata speaks of different heavens associated with different gods. Thus, Brahma's heaven is *Brahmaloka*, those of *Shiva* is *Kailasha*, and of *Vishnu* is *Vaikunta*. The *Ayudhas* and *Vahana* of the sectarian gods also get settled in the Mahabharata.

Many famous episodes connecting with *Shiva* will *Daksh Andhakas*, Tripura are first found in this epic. *Nandi, Shivaganas* and *Linga* are also associated with *Shiva*. It describes *Skanda Karthikeya* as the son *Agni* and *Akashganaga* in one place and as the son of *Agni* and *Svaha* in another place. Skanda's marriage with *Devasana* is also described. In yet another place *Skanda*, son of *Shiva*, destroys *Tarakasura*. Ganapathy or Ganesh (Pillaiyar of the Tamils) is conspicuous by his absence in the epic literature. The myth of Ganesh writing the Mahabharata while being dictated by Vyasa is a later addition. In the Mahabharata we find the earliest treatment of the famous philosophical schools like *Yoga, Sankhya, Vedanta, Pasupata* and *Pancharatra*. There we see Indian Philosophical schools in their transitional level between the period of the *Upanishads* and of the later codified six systems.

These three sources, Indus Valley culture, Vedic culture and Epics along with many others contributed extensively to the present day diverse grandeur of the Hindu culture. Though, in general Vedic culture is taken to be the source of Hinduism, the role played by non-Vedic standards of culture in shaping the Hinduism cannot be ignored. All the Shaivate roots and the forms of worship can be traced to Indus Civilizations. Whereas aspects of social system such as Chaturvarna, Ashramadharmas, Purusharthas can be traced from Vedas. These social aspects were consolidated in Epics. The epic Mahabharata also presents the Yogic system of Hinduism in a sitting way. Let us now turn to the features of Hinduism.

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Significant features of Hinduism

Given the above discussions on the sources of Hinduism, let us elaborate some of ht significant and essential features of Hinduism. Four fold divisions of society, four fold division of human life, four fold divisions of objects of life, four fold division of yogic system and law of *Karma* are some of the essential features that are discussed elaborately here.

Chatur Varnas - Four choices of service

On account of the impressions and influences which the souls carry with them from life to life, each individual soul has its own tastes and inclination, talents and capacities. Even a child knows that no two individuals are alike or equal to each other in every respect. The differences in inclinations and capacities are fundamental and, as such they cannot be erased totally by applying any external pressures. The manufacturers of automobiles may be able to manufacture a few thousand vehicles of the same shape, size, color and power. But, even the most efficient, widely read, profoundly learned and scientifically advanced teacher cannot train even two of his students to be equal to each other in every respect; and there is no wonder about it. Insentient things can be moulded entirely to our likings but sentient and sentient beings, they cannot be shaped wholly according to our ideas and ideals. Wisdom lies in recognising these innate differences in the individuals and trying to help them to develop their personalities according to their own tastes and capacities. The *Vedas* speak quite unequivocally about these inborn differences (Sudhakar Chaturvedi, 2004: *116).*

Recognizing these natural differences, the *Vedas* describe four spheres of activities and provide each individual with the scope to develop himself or herself according to his or her choice. Each sphere of activity based on solid ground of individual choice, is styled *Varna*; *Varnas* are four in number, and they are termed *Brahman* or intellectual, *Kshatriya* or martial, *Vaishya* or commercial and *Shudra* or manual. These Varnas are not invariably based on birth; and as such, they cannot be equated with the present day castes, which run into thousands. The Varnas are chosen by individuals, whereas the castes are what individuals are born into. The *Varnas* are scientific and rational division of mankind aimed at progress of the individual as well as of the society; but while the caste system is a bane on humanity, based as it is on the birth of the individuals, creating a lot of heart-burn and blood with its notions of superiority and inferiority.

Varnas are natural and rational divisions that promote the cause of human welfare. Some may not like the nomenclature; but the content of

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the *Varna Vyavastha* cannot be nullified. According to the *Varna* system, all the activities or professions that human-beings can possibly adopt are broadly divided into 4 classes; and each individual is at liberty to choose any one of them and belong to it, of course, bearing in mind, his or her own inclination and capacities. Birth in a particular prevailing *Varna* may help one to some extent in making one's choice, but it is neither necessary nor inevitable for *Brahmin*'s son to be a *Brahmin* or a *Kshatriya*'s son to be a *Kshatriya*. A lawyer's son may or may not become a lawyer. It is not necessary that a doctor's son should invariably become a doctor. The fundamental basis of the *Varna* system, according to the *Vedas* is the merit, profession and the nature of each individual and not birth exclusively. Birth in a particular family is supposed to belong to a *Varna* may exert its influence and may also help or impede, to an extent, the individual to make his or her choice, but it is of secondary importance.

Brahmins

The Rig *Veda* says: devotion to God, a pleasant attitude of mind, non-violence, the performance of sacrifices, the light of knowledge, severe penance, the propagation of the 4 *Vedas* through discourses, common accessibility, these are the characteristics of *Brahmins*. *Brahmins* then, are the intellectuals, liberal and unselfish by nature, learned and enlightening with knowledge, steadfast in devotion to God and services to mankind. They are indeed like the heads of mankind. The so called 'caste" into which they are born is of no consequence, if those characteristics are found in them. Teaching and studying the *Vedas:* sacrificing for their own benefit and for others; giving and accepting alms.

Kshatriyas

The *Vedic* concept of a *Kshatriya* is the one who, adheres to spiritual resolve, purity of character, erudition in political and administrative science, zeal to promote non-violent activities, undivided and single-minded devotion to God, constant endeavor to uphold truth and justice, righteousness and divine revelation and all comprehensive protection of the subjects at times of peace as well as of war by accomplishing noble deeds. To protect the people; to bestow gifts: to offer sacrifices; to study the *Vedas* but not to teach.

Vaishyas

According to the *Atharva Veda, Vaishya* should inspire the others, affluent man of commerce, our guide on the path of prosperity, crushing, miserliness and the inimical sense of

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1. *Pundit Sudhakar Chaturvedi, 2004 Grace and glory of Vedic Dharma. Bangalore: Arya Samaj P 126 (Rk 7.103.8.) (sominah) devoted deeply to God and enjoying His bliss, (adhvaryavah) absolutely non-violent and engaged in conducting yejnas, (ghartmina) brilliant with the splendor of knowledge and engaged in penance, (sisvidanah) sweating with sever discipline, (krnvantah) propagating, (parivatsarinam brahma) the universal and divine Vedic knowledge, 9brahmanasah) the Brahmins, move about openly, (kecit na guhyah) though they were hidden before, and , as though, (avirbhavanti) they now come out with flying clouds, after competing their spiritual activities like the deep study of the scriptures, concentration, meditations etc.*
2. *Ibid. P 127* (Rk 7.66.8.) *(Dhrtavratah) steadfast in abiding by spiritual resolve, (yajnaniskrtah) purified by noble deeds, (brhaddiva) effulgent with profound knowledge of political science, and having(adhvaranamabhisriyah) the grace and luster of non-violent activities, (agnihotarah) worshippers of the Refulgent and Omniscient Lord, (rtasapah) upholders of truth, justice, righteousness and divine knowledge and, (adruhah) free from malice and treachery, (kshatriyh) the Kshatriya, (asrjan0 accomplish,(apah) great deeds, (vrtaturye) by destroying inimical forces that intrude in invade.*

greed, being the master of wealth, he may be the giver of wealth. To tend cattle; to bestow gifts; to engage in different professions; to trade; to lend money; to cultivate land and to study the *Vedas*.

Shoodra

The *Rig*veda says that the *Shoodras* are not a despicable lot. Simply because they are incapable of taking any other work other than manual labor they should not be looked down. They have their own praise worthy virtues. *Sudras* are described as those who need protection from others, who are bereft of high attachments, who are untiring, indefatigable, un frightened by death, un railing, un deliberated, strong and sturdy, free from ambitions and greed (Sudhakar Chaturvedi, 2004: 128*)*.

Those who seek truth would do well to remember the etymological sense of the world Shoodra *"Su asu dravati iti sudrah- suca dravatiti va"*. He, who is always swift and active, is a *Shoodra* or he who moves with luster born of unselfishness, is a *Shoodra*.

A *Shoodra* is not inferior, nor is a *Vaishya, Kshatriya* or *Brahmin* superior. They are all absolutely equal, serving society, as also themselves according to their capacities and inclinations. The main duty of *Sudras* is to serve the above three *Varnas*.

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The *Varnas* are not water-tight compartments. Different members of the same family may belong to different *Varnas* and yet live under the same roof. There is no segregation of these four classes. The construction of separate colonies for these *Varnas* has led to the degeneration and falseness of the *Shoodras*: it has caused their non-contact with and segregation from, the enlightened sections of society; this, in turn, has resulted in the emergence of another class generally known as "untouchables". The *Vedas* are dead-set against the tearing asunder of the one human society on such grounds.

So, names may change; outward appearances also may change; but classes given to intellectual, martial, mercantile and manual labor have always been there in all the countries; they will always be there in all countries in future too, whether the states are communist or socialist, capitalist or imperialist, theocratic or secular. The *Vedic* principles are eternal and universal. No nation, no society, no individual can evade them, without being detrimental to itself, himself or herself.

He who carries out in society the functions performed by the face in body of an individual is a *Brahmin*. All the organs of perception the visual, the olfactory, the palaal, the auditory and the tactile are located in the head. Collecting knowledge and communicating it to the Soul is the function of the head. It is precisely this function that a *Brahmin* does in society. He who fulfils in

3. *Ibid. P 128, (Aham) I, (codayami) inspire, (indram) the affluent, (vanijam) man of commerce,(sah a etu nah) may he be favorably disposed to us, (astu) may he be, (nah pura eta) our four-runner, our guide on the path of prosperity, (nudan) crushing, (aratim) miserliness and, (mrigam pripanthinam) the inimical sense of greed, (isanah) being the master of wealth, (sah astu) may he be, (dhanada) the giver of wealth, (mahyam) to me.*
4. *Pundit Sudhakar Chaturvedi, 2004 Grace and glory of Vedic Dharma. Bangalore: Arya Samaj P. 128. (Amavisnavah) desirous of protection from others, (Trdilah) bereft of high attachments, (atrdilasah) still not detached from the word, (asramanah) untiring, (asrthitah) indefatigable, (amrtyavah) unfrightened by death, (anaturah) unailing, (ajarah) undebilitated by old are, (supivasah) strong and sturdy, (atrsitah) free from ambitions and, (atrsnajah) free from greed, (adrayah) rocklike din strength and respectable are the Shoodras. (Rig Veda)*

society the functions carried on in the body of an individual by the arms is a *Kshatriya*. The arms are the administrative as well as protective

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organs of the body. It is precisely this thing that a *Kshatriya* does in society; he rules and protects. What are the functions of the body central? The thighs represent the central part of the body.

In the central part of the body, from neck downwards are situated the heart, the lungs, the stomach, the alimentary canal, the organs of procreation in short, all the important organs that keep the body alive and help its development. These organs jointly produce energy and distribute it to all the parts of the body from the top of head to the tips of toes. He who does the same thing in the society i.e., who produces wealth and utilizes it for the benefit of the society is a *Vaishya*. In the very nature of things, *Vaishyas* are in a majority, so much so in the *Vedas*, the vit means *Vaishya* is used to signify *Praja* or subjects as in : *"tvaamvisho vrinataama raajyaaya" (Atharva 3.4.2.)* i. e. , let *Vaishyas* accept you to rule over the land. Let there be no mistake about it. It is not as though the ruler has to rule only over the *Vaishyas*. It is only to be understood that because of their preponderance among the subjects, the word vit has been used as a synonym for the word *Praia*. And, just as legs, carry it to the desired place, lower limbs, or say the feet uphold the whole body, he who carries the whole weight of the society is a *Shudra*. No question of looking him down as sub-human or a slave arises here at all.

A little more attention and we can feel the beauty and perceive the significance of this analogy. Suppose a thorn pricks the foot-the *Shudra*, it is the head, the *Brahmin* that sighs in grief first; it is the arm the *Kshatriya* who hurries up to remove the thorn. Let any part of the body be hurt; the head, say the brain is the first to feel it; then the arms swiftly move to the aching part. *Brahmin* and *Kshatriya* they are. Similarly, if there is pain in any part of thorax, it is the *Brahmin* that groans first. In society, all these four *Varnas* are interrelated and inter-linked. There is no question of superiority and inferiority among them. Each *Varna* is equally great and useful in the spheres of their activity for the common good of the society. The *Vedas* strike at the very root of the sense of superiority and inferiority.

A message of equality cannot be more candid, more appealing. One may be a *Brahmin*, a *Kshatriya*, a *Vaishya* or a *Shudra*; that makes no difference. They are all equal and enjoy equal rights, besides commanding equal respect. There is, no doubt, ample room for criminal, heinous and bewildering inequality in the caste system; but

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the *Varnas* are definitely not castes. Whereas castes are supposedly inherited, *Varnas* are invariably acquired by choice. While castes are believed to be based on birth, which is a pure chance, *Varnas* are rationally based on the merit, profession and inclination of the individual. According to traditional belief, inter-caste dining and inter-caste marriages are taboo; but *Varna* begins a matter of one's own choice, of course, with the scientific basis of the three cardinal factors explained above. The question of inter *Varna* marriages

5. *Pundit Sudhakar Chaturvedi, 2004 Grace and glory of Vedic Dharma. Bangalore: Arya Samaj P 120, (Brahmanah) Brahmin, (asid asya mukham) was his face, (rajnayah) Kshatriya, (abhavat asya bahy) was his arms, (tat) he, (yat vaisyah) who is vaishaya, (asya madhyan) was the central part of the body, (padbhyam) for the function of the feet, (ajayata) was, (sudhrah) the Shoodra. (Atharva 19.6.6.)*
6. *Ibid. P 122, (Ete) these men, (ajyestasah) are without superiors, (akanistasah) without inferiors, (bhratarah) they are mutually brothers, (vavrudh) they march onwards, (saubhagaya) for prosperity, (Yuva) the eternally youthful, (svapa) the soul-protecting, (rudrah) grief alleviating God, (esam pita) is their father, (sudugha) the richly feeding, (prusnih) mother earth, (sudina) produces happy days, (matudbhyah) for these mortals. Again*

does not arise at all. With the object of maintaining complete harmony, mutual attraction and undivided devotion to each other in married life, a man and woman of like merits professions and inclinations must get married; whether they hail from the same caste or different ones is immaterial. From this stand point, "inter-caste marriage" is a misnomer, because, a man marries only a woman and they are both human beings. They belong to the same caste, we mean human species. Inter- dining is no problem at all, again, in the *Varna* system. Common eating places, common places of worship, common association are nothing new, they are all as old as the *Vedas* themselves. It is only the later dated superstitious rigidity of the caste-system that stood in the way of a free and common social life.

Chatur Ashrams: The four stages of life

Human life should be as a spring-board for attaining divine heights and achieving immortality. With the object of enabling man to achieve this end, the *Vedas* have divided the duration of human-life into four stages. Each stage is known as an *Ashrama*. Man has to grow strong in

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every respect mentally, spiritually, intellectually and physically. He has to utilize the strength so acquired to serve society. He has to prepare for the renunciation of worldly attachments with a view to realising the ultimate truth and he has to have a dedicated life towards such realization and for the purpose of bringing about such as awakening in society that people are able to make real progress as human beings. The four stages of acquisition, utilization, preparation and realization are known as *Brahmcharya*, *Grahasthya*, *Vanaprasthya* and *Sanyasa* respectively. A man may live for more than hundred years and the *Vedas* do not rule out its possibility. In special cases, and under completely favorable circumstances, a man can hope to live even for three centuries.

But, under the normal conditions, man's life lasts for one hundred years. According to the Vedas The hundred years of life, usually available to man, are divided into four quarters and each quarter i.e., two decades and a half, forms one stage.

Brahmacharya

Brahmacharya the first stage extends from birth to the time when man completes his twenty-fifth year, and it is called *Brahmacharya Ashram* or the "stage of celibacy".

7. *Ibid.P. 125 (Atharva Veda3.30.6) O you men,(vah prapa) may your water reservoirs, (samani) be common, (annabhagah) may the shares of food, (saha) be enjoyed jointly, congregationally, (yunaji) I unite, (vah) you all, (samane ypoktre) under the yoke of a common code of conduct, (saha) with the other, (saparyata) worship, (agnim) the lord of lusture, (samyancah) congregationally, (iva) just as, (arah) the spokes, touch, (nabhim) the hub, (abhitah) from all round.*

8. *Ibid P.135."Shatam Jeeva Sharado Vardhamaanah" "live for a hundred years progressively". The Yajurveda says: "Jijeevishecchatam samaah" (Yaju.40.2.) "One should desire to live for a hundred years". The Atharva too blesses us thus: - "tatte badhnaamyaayushe varchase balaaaya deerghaayutvaaya shatashaaradaaya" (Atharva).35.1.) "I bestow on thee power to live with spiritual glow, physical strength and longevity, to enjoy a hundred years". The Yajurveda (25.22) too says "the noble souls enjoy life for a hundred autumns" and it puts this prayer into the mouth of devoted men and women "adeenaah syaama sharadah shatam, bhooyashca sharadah shataat (Yaju.36.24) "May we live unsubdued for one hundred autumns; rather longer then a century". But human society does not thrive on exceptions. It rests and moves on the basis of general rules.*

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Though the word Brahamcharin is usually rendered into English as a 'Celibate', it should be said that the word touches only the fringe of the total concept of *Brahmacharya*. Literally, the compound word Brahamcharya means "moving about mentally and intellectually in God and the *Vedas*". The corollary is that, when one's mind and intellect (rather then one's energies) are used to contemplate on God and to acquire *Vedic* knowledge, one should not indulge in carnal pleasures. Restraint on the functions of the sensual faculties is thus imposed; and that is celibacy. As an infant, a boy or a girl is under the care and protection of his/her parents. When he or she is about eight years, he or she is to be admitted into a *Gurukula* to be in constant touch with and under the guidance of a really learned, noble hearted and highly qualified Guru or preceptor, away from the din and bustle and distraction and temptations of the cities and also the pampering of the parents. The *Gurukula*, abode of learning, should be situated in a peaceful and beautiful place, remote from the congested towns and cities. The *Vedic* conception of a place of learning is clearly expressed in *Rig Veda* as *mantra.*

In such natural surroundings capable of awakening a sense of theism even in the hearts of atheists, and affording soul-inspiring spiritual thoughts of the purest order and entirely free from the distracting scenes of worldly luxuries, the minds of boys and girls are sure to touch new heights of glory; and their intellectual power definitely improves especially when they are taught by preceptors of erudition and spotless character not only by word of mouth but also by practical example.

Brahmacharya is the foundation of the structure of life. In this stage, besides learning all that is necessary for worldly and spiritual progress, the youngsters develop that most precious feature of human life which is also known as character. Discipline always co-exists with character. A disciplined and noble character is the most valuable asset that man can ever hope to possess. Regarding this first stage of life, the *Atharva Veda*.

Atharvana Veda comprises the relation of teacher and disciple to that of the one between a pregnant woman and her baby in the womb the love of the Acharya for his disciple is equal to that of the pregnant woman towards the child in her womb. The disciple being "born" after

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three nights signifies his stay under the care of his preceptor till he gets over three kinds of darkness or ignorance with regard to God, the soul and matter. When the boy or the girl comes out into the light, i.e., when he or she has acquired real knowledge about God, Soul and matter, even learned people are so pleased that they rush towards him or her to meet and greet him or her. It is in the *Brahmacharya Ashram* that the boy or the girl develops all the powers that are required to make the life ahead of him or her complete success. Who says Strong in body, powerful in mind, brilliant in intellect, noble at heart affectionate in speech, rich with all divine heritages: such is the

9. *Pundit Sudhakar Chaturvedi, 2004 Grace and glory of Vedic Dharma. Bangalore: Arya Samaj P. 137. (Upahvare) in the valleys or at the foot of, (girnam) the mountains, (ca) and, (sangathe) in the confluence, (nandinam) of the rivers, (ajayata) is born, (dhiya) by achieving intellectual progress. (Rig 8.6.28)*
10. *Ibid P 138. (Atharva 11.5.3) (Upanayamanaah) initiating the Brahmacharin to the first order, (acaryah) the preceptor, (antah garbham krnute)_ keeps, (brahmcarinam) the brahmahcarin as though keeps in his own interior, (bibhartitam) He keeps him, (udare) in his own person, (tisrah ratrih) for three nights, (devah) the learned and the noble souls, (abhisamyanti) run from all sides, (tam jatam drastum) to see the Brahnacarin born.*

description of the *Brahmachari* and the *Brahmcharini*. They glow with spiritual light. They know no fear of death, because they are strong in every conceivable respect.

The first twenty five years are to be the period of *Brahmacharya* for a man. Owing to natural biological factors, woman grows faster than man; so for a girl, the *Brahmacharya* period ends when she is sixteen. But it does not mean that a man must necessarily get into the second stage of life when he is twenty five, and a girl when she is sixteen. A man can remain a *Brahmachari* till he is forty eight and a woman till she is thirty two, if they are confident that they can control their sense organs and maintain their character untarnished and engage themselves in noble pursuit. But, there will be exceptions, if they are highly gifted and ennobled souls, they can remain unmarried for the whole of their lives and serve mankind, besides carrying on their spiritual endeavors for the realisation of God.

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Grahastya

The second stage of life, known as *Grahastya Ashrama* (generally referred to as *Grihasthaashrama*) begins when a man is twenty five years and lasts till he is fifty. This is usually recognized as the householders' life. It is not given to all to dedicate themselves totally and unreservedly to spiritual pursuits. Nor is it God's desire that all men an women should remain single; for if it were so, he would not have treated two different sexes; he would have managed with only one sex. Procreation is the aim behind the creation of the male and female sexes. And, to keep the sexual life under constant check and restraint, God has ordained the sacred institution of marriage. A house holder's life is not to be looked down upon, as some religious sects seem to think. According to *Vedic Dharma*, a house holder occupies an honored position in the social set-up, as it is on him that the entire stages of life depend and rely. Without householders, where could Brahmcharis come from? Who would support the later two *Ashrams*? All that is acquired through hard and disciplined work in the final stage (all the will-power, intellectual acquisitions, talents, physical strength and learning) is to be used for the service and welfare of the society at large, as also for one's own progress as a human being. This is best done as a householder. If the householders of a nation (who, in the very nature of things are in a majority) mould their lives according to the *Vedic* concept, that nation can never be weak, destitute or miserable. It will be a strong and prosperous nation which cannot be vanquished by any power on earth. What is the ideal of the *Grihastha Ashrama*? The *Atharva Veda* says "the couple should recognize their responsibilities enjoy life by virtue of their greatness, maintain spotless character and rear well behaved, intelligent and obedient children".

The homes can really be a heaven on earth, if all members of the family men and women in the family have noble ideas in view, recognize your duties and responsibilities, be not torn asunder, be not served from one another emotionally, worshipping God congregationally and working to earn your bread in mutual cooperation leading life jointly under the yoke of common

11. *Pundit Sudhakar Chaturvedi, 2004 Grace and glory of Vedic Dharma. Bangalore: Arya Samaj P. 141-2. (Atharva 14.2.43) O you couple, (syonadyoneh adhi budhyamanau) rising to the occasion and recognizing*

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your responsibilities in the house that is an abode of joy, (hasamudau) laughing and smiling with cheer in your hearts, (modamanau mahasa) enjoying life by virtue of your own greatness, (sugu) maintaining spotlessness of character,(suputrau) being proud parents of well behaved, intelligent and obedient children and, (sugrhau) respectable possessors of a decent well-managed prosperous and hospitable home, (jivau) pulsating with ever active and meaningful life, (tarathah) pass through, (vibhatih usash) bright and promising dawns".

righteousness and, speaking sweetly and affectionately to one another, come along progressing and prospering I make, all of you, traders on the same path and, united and understanding mentally. May the son be, obedient to his father, may his spiritual resolve be identical with that of his father, may his mind be in agreement with that of his mother, may the wife speak honey like sweet and soothing words, (patye) to her husband. May not a brother hate his brother and may not a sister hate her sister, single-minded and cherishing common spiritual resolves, speak words with noble intentions.

Polygamy and polyandry are both foreign to the *Vedic* conception of marriage. One woman for one man is the binding rule; it brooks no breach on any account. Human beings are not birds or beasts to sexual enjoyment promiscuously changing their partners as many times as they desire. The husband's fidelity to his wife is compulsory as the wife's fidelity to her husband. The difference of sex is no justification for infidelity on the part of the husband to his wife. The husband's fidelity to his wife should be as firm and steadfast as that of the wife to her husband as stated above. That is why the *Atharva Veda* offers its blessings to the couple be united here be not separated, enjoy and live decently the whole span of your life, playing, bringing cheer to the others residing in your own house.

So there is no question of separation or divorce; for, according to the *Vedas*, marriage is not a contract, but a sacrament. It is more a coming together of two souls than a union of two bodies. Though it is natural for human beings to lead a normal sexual life (as it is for the other living beings) men and women should not forget for a moment that God's purpose behind sex is not the enjoyment of carnal pleasures, but the perpetuation of human species. Only when there is a desire on the part of both to have progeny, should the sexual act be performed. Married life should not be treated as a licence for an unrestrained sex

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life. The *Vedas* unambiguously exhort us to lead a life of restraint.

Vanaprastha

12. *Ibid page no 143*

    1.(jyaysvantah (cittinah) (ma vi yausta) (sam radhayanthah) ,(sadhurah carantah) (anyah anyasmai valgu vadantah) (eta) (krnmi) (vah) (sadhricinam) (sammanasah) (Atharva 3.30)

    2. (Bhavatu putraah) (pituah anuvratah), (sammanah mantra) (vadatu jaya), (madhumatim santivam vacuum).(Atharva 3.30.3)

    3. (ma bhrata dviksat), (bhrataram), (uta), (Ma svasa svasaram) (bhutva) becoming (samyancha), (savratah) (vadata vacuum) (bhadraya) (Atharva 3.30)

13. *Ibid. P. 145. (Atharva 14.1.42) O lady! (asaasana) aspiring for, (saumansam) tranquility, (prajam) worthy progeny, (saubhagyam) prosperity and, (rayim) wealth, (bhutva) becoming, (anuvrata patyuh) compatible to your husband with the same spiritual resolves as that of your spouse, (nahyasva) control, (kam) mind and body, (sam) together, (amrtya) for achieving immortality.*

14. *Ibid. P. 146. (Atharva 14.1.22) (Iha eva stam), (ma viyaustam) (vyasnutam), (visvam ayuh) (kridantau) (modamanau, (svastakau).*

15. *Ibid. P. 146-7. (Rig Veda 10.85.23) (santu) let those, (anrksarah) thorn less and, yrjavah) straight, (panthah) paths, (nah) be ours, (yebhih) by which, (sakhayah yanti vareyam) the friendly souls achieve prosperity, (niniyat aryamah bhagah) may the just and refulgent lord lead, (nah) us, (sam sam) together and aptly, (devah0 o you noble souls! (astu nah sam jaspatyam) may our married life be, (sauyamam) well restrained and properly managed.*

The third stage of life is *Vanaprastha* i.e., forest dwelling. When the householder has completed twenty-five years of meaningful married life and has served the society, he must transfer all his responsibilities to his son and retreat to some place away from cities, with his wife-if she is willing, without her if she is not. The object of this move is to prepare himself for the hard and strenuous life of a *Sanyasin*, after the completion of this period. From the fiftieth year till the seventy fifth years, this stage lasts. The Atharva Veda describes this stage as charecterised by grieflessness in which the soul should get over the dense darkness of ignorance, and of worldly attachments in search of acquiring knowledge.

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The object of this *Ashrama* is to do penance i.e., to make fulfill vows of austerity and carry on spiritual practices like meditation, Sandhya, Yajna, Pranayama etc., besides keeping up the deep and concentrated study of the *Vedas*. Even if the wife accompanies her husband; they must live not as husband and wife, but as brother and sister, helping each other in carrying on the spiritual practices.

The second aspect of this *Vanaprastha Ashram* is that it would solve the problem of the nation's children. With the learning acquired in the *Brahmacharya Ashram*, and ripen in the *Grihastha Ashram* by the practical experience gathered therein, the *Vanaprastha* persons are the best suited and are absolutely qualified to occupy the high positions of teachers. If old people retire and make room for the younger generation, the unemployment problem also will not be so acute. Thus, the Vanaprasthas besides raising their own spiritual standards can also serve society by imparting proper education to the children of the nation.

Out of the five *Yajnas*, only the first two (namely, *Brahmayajana* and *Devayajan)* are prescribed for *Vanaprasthas*. As they themselves would have to depend upon the philanthropy of the public for their maintenance, they cannot perform *Atithiyajna* and *Balivasishvadeva Yajan*, like *Grihasthaasa*. Even so, so far as it lies in their capacity, they also serve the guests and feed the animals. Question of Pitrayajna does not arise at all, as they do not stay with their parents.

The hermitage of the forest dweller, as we have already stated under the caption of *Brahmacharya*, is the best place for students to receive proper education. Teaching the future citizens of the nation, and disciplining himself with single-minded dedication to studies and spiritual practices is pleasure of *Vanaprastha Ashrama*.

Sanyasa

The fourth and the last stage of human life is known as *Sanyasa Ashram* i.e., the age of absolute renunciation. Though apparently, the term signifies something like a snapping of all relationship with the world, it actually means nothing of that sort. *Sanyasa* essentially, is an attitude of mind, not an ostentatious running away from the duties which one has to do and responsibilities which one has to shoulder for the sake of mankind and for one's own next life as a human being. So long as the physical body exists, its needs are to be met and for this, the *Sanyasin* has to depend upon society. Taking something from society but giving it nothing in return would

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16. Pundit Sudhakar Chaturvedi, 2004 *Grace and glory of Vedic Dharma*. Bangalore: Arya Samaj P. 148. (Atharva 9.5.1) *(Etam Anaya) prepare this soul, (arabhasva) have recourse to this stage, (agacchatu) let the soul reach, (sukrtam lokamapi) state of life achieved by virtuous ones, (ptajanan) acquiring knowledge, (tritva mahanti tamamsi) getting over the dense darkness of ignorance and of worldly attachments, (bahudha) by several types of penance, (akramtamajah) may the immortal souls get a hold over, (tritiyam nakam) this third stage of grieflessness*

be nothing other than getting indebted to society. And, according to the *Vedas*, indebtedness is a soul teasing liability, binding it to this world.

Positively, indebtedness is a sin. A *Sanyasin* cannot be a sinner. He does not renounce the world as such, but renounce the attachment to the world; but, the whole world belongs to him. He does not belong to any particular nation, community race or sect, but he belongs to every nation, community, race and sect. Attached to none, he owns everyone. His mind is above selfishness, and attachment. It is given only to a *Sanyasin* to present the best model of an ideal man. He is the guide, philosopher and friend of the whole world. He is above the pairs of likes dislikes, pleasure and pain, delight and distress, gladness and sadness, merriment and melancholy, heat and cold, love and hatred. He is not bound to do the last four Yajnas i.e., service to parents, hospitality to uninvited guests and feeding of the poor and the needy, of the destitute and of other creatures, as he own nothing and is not in a position to do these things, and also because he does not stay for a long time at any place in order to keep alive the sense of nonattachment. But, he does keep the fire of knowledge burning brightly; and he inspires house-holders to attend to these Yajnas actively and constantly. By his own spiritual practices, he keeps himself constantly in touch with God. And by carrying the divine message of the *Vedas* to every home, he keeps the flame of service, sacrifice and spirituality, glowing in the hearts of the people. It is such a soul given to renunciation that makes the best *Athithi*.

If one is to get initiated into the holy order of a *Sanyasin*, the three ambitions to be abandoned are attachment to progeny, attachment to wealth and attachment to fame. Even those who find it easy to get over the first two, find it extremely hard to rise above the last one. But, unless and until all the three are given up totally and unreservedly one cannot

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do any justice to the holy order; contrarily, one tarnishes its fair name irretrievably.

The *Vedas*, therefore, specify for those who desire to enter into the holy order, certain indispensable qualifications. Though these qualifications are equally applicable to all human beings, they acquire a special significance and assume greater spiritual values when applied to those in the holy order of Sanyasa.

Knowledge, action quite in keeping with it, the supreme object of realizing God-this is the minimum that is expected of a *Sanyasin*. Pomp and show, ostentanious processions and elegant performances, wealth mutts and hollow but elaborate rituals; these have nothing to do with Sanyasa or *Sanyasins*. They renounce all glamour and observe the utmost simplicity to achieve two objects at one stroke to be free from worries and to cause least inconvenience to society. They should be *rtadyumnas* i.e., *Vedic* knowledge and *Dharma* should be their wealth and might; they should be "*satya karanas*" i.e., all their actions should be based on truth and they should be 'somaraajans' i.e., they should glow with spiritual light, radiated by real devotion to God. They should be '*parishkritas*' i.e., purified by contact with god. Being 'Hindus' i.e., merciful and compassionate souls they should be moving from place to place preaching and enlightening the masses and also working for their salvation along with their own.

Such, is the *Vedic* concept of *Sanyas Ashram*. It is obvious that it is not possible for any individual soul to rise to this standard by simply changing the color of his clothes and adhering to the external paraphernalia of a *Sanyasin*. An unquenchable thirst for the realisation of God, a through knowledge of the *Vedas*, the indomitable courage to renounce all worldly pleasure and attachment the will to suffer and unmatched desire to serve God's creation these are the characteristics which mark out a *Sanyasin.*

In the normal order of things, man should pass through all these four stages, to touch the highest mark of perfection as a human-being. But it should always be borne in mind that, with the single exception of *Brahmacharya*, the other three *Ashramas* are not compulsory. They are optional and deserve to be adopted only by those who are equal to them. An impotent and sickly person becoming a *Grihastha* or a libidinous taking to *Sanyasa* or *Vanaprastha* can do much harm.

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Purusharthas: Objects of life

According to the *Vedic Dharma*, there are four objects of life, which are to be achieved by all human beings in order to realize the ultimate goal of human life i.e. maximum evolution and salvation of the soul. The *Vedic Dharma* is not a set of dogmatic beliefs, but it is a rational and scientific way of life. *Vedic Dharma* attaches equal importance to the progress of both kinds; spiritual and material. This harmonious progress can be achieved, by attaining the four objects of human life. The supreme or the ultimate goal of human life is the realization of God, which results in the emancipation of the soul.

The Rig Veda refers to four arts which would help people to grow into highly evolved souls. These four objects of life are referred to *Vedic* literature as *Dharma* (i.e., righteousness), *Artha* (i.e., acquisition of the means of livelihood and of proper enjoyment), *Kama (*i.e., enjoyment of life in a righteous way) and *Moksha* (i.e., the salvation of the soul). If these four objects are achieved, it may be said without fear of contradiction that the ultimate goal of human life has been reached.

Dharma

Right knowledge, right action and right worship. These three aspects of the *Dharma* give a practical shape to *Dharma*, which consists of all the virtuous qualities that uphold and sustain the human soul. By following the principles of *Dharma*, a man becomes a model for mankind. By putting into practice the five spiritual resolves of non-violence, truth, non-stealing, self control and non-accumulation and by strictly adhering to the principle of sacrifice, justice, honesty and *Vedic* knowledge, individuals bring peace and happiness to the human society, as well as to themselves. By enlightenment and realization of God, they work simultaneously towards spiritual progress. Our readers can thus see that *Vedic Dharma* is not sectarian and dogmatic in nature and content, but universal and pragmatic in every respect. This is the first of the objects to be achieved.

Artha

The second object is *Artha*, or the acquition of the means of livelihood. Regarding this, it is interesting to note what the *Vedas* have to say. Non-accumulation doesn't mean utter poverty or destitution. It only means the absence of any concentration of the wealth (to which the whole of society has a right) in a few hands. No individual should

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suffer from want. O Lord of the Universe may we be the masters of wealth. This is a significant prayer to God almighty, offered by all the followers of *Vedic Dharma*. One must earn; but one should not allow what is earned by one to stagnate by accumulation, and to cause disturbance in the society.

According to Veda, one should earn in a hundred ways, and distribute in a thousand ways, but of course, not running into bankruptacy. But, while earning in a hundred ways, one should not lose sight of the dictates of *Dharma* and take to foul means. To ensure honesty while earning, the first place is given to *Dharma* and only after that is *Artha* spoken about. The *Rig*veda says: Gamble not with dice, work hard and put in hard work, be happy and contended with what is thus earned by you, considering it as abundant, therein lies cattle-wealth, and there, the comfort of family life, this omniparous and divinely inspiring lord of the universe, directs me this way. One should put in only hard work and one should not resort to unfair means, to earn easy money. The *Rig*veda points unambiguously, to the proper way of earning, when it states "Man, should know, the wealth that lies hidden everywhere, he should tread, the path of justice and honesty, with humility, and, he must speak properly, through the instruments of his own noble thoughts and actions, he should, with will power have recourse to, the talent that lead to spiritual prosperity". Wealth earned this way, will definitely prove a divine gift. It manifests the grace and the glory of a real human being. Earn one must; but one must employ only fair means, never foul ones.

Kama

The third object of human life is *Kama* i.e., the enjoyment of life in a righteous way. Generally, the word *Kama* is understood to mean lust or sexual urge. But in the context of the four objects of life, *Kama* does not invariably mean lust. In the *Vedas*, the word *Kama* is used to refer to the individual soul, as well as the universal spirit. Generally, it means desire, sexual urge being one among many. There are desires and all of them are not congenial or conducive to progress, both material and spiritual. There are many aspects of *Kama* but all of them are not intended to be taken in the context of the four *Purusharthas*.

Only such desires as are conducive to spiritual and material progress of mankind constitute the third object of life, *Kama*. The

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fulfillment of such noble desires through the proper enjoyment of the life, by utilizing *Artha* is *Kama*. As human life has two contents, spiritual and physical, one cannot overlook, ignore or neglect the material aspects of life. Life is meant for living and not for throwing away. But, the third object *Kama* necessarily shuts out such aspects of enjoyment, as impede real human progress and turn man into a varitable brute, retaining and nurturing the desire to eat, drink and make merry, forgetting the soul and God altogether.

Moksha

The fourth object of life is *Moksha*, i.e., salvation. According to the *Vedas*, *Moksha* or salvation is not a region or place, where, according to the common belief, the liberated souls go to enjoy eternal bliss, in the constant company of God. *Kailash, Vaikunta*, eternal heaven and other such names are given by different religions, but the *Vedas* say that salvation as the only a state of being, wherein the souls are entirely free from all kinds of grief and enjoy eternal bliss. In this state of being, the souls are free from bondage of the physical bodies and are in their own form. So far, as the souls are embodied, they can never be touched by pleasures and pains. It is, therefore, quite reasonable that, in order to enjoy external bliss, the souls should be incorporeal. The *Rig Veda* describes this state of being as, disappeared, and, where the state of freedom from all kinds of suffering under God's supervision exists, and, where the qualities that uphold and nourish the soul and contentment reigm supreme.

If the human soul has achieved the first three objects and purified itself, vanquishing all sinful thoughts and actions, it qualifies itself to enter the state of salvation, evidently after death. Thus, the fourth object also is achieved.

17. *Aksairma diyvyah krisimit krsasva!! Xcitte ramasva bahu manyamanah!! Tatra gavah kitava tatra jaya!! Tanme vicaste asvitayamaryah!! (Rk.10.34.13.)*

All religions speak about *Moksha* or something equivalent to that. But, according to the belief of the followers of almost all religions, salvation or *Moksha* is eternal in the sense that it never ends. However, *Vedic Dharma* says that *Moksha* is not eternal in that sense. It is achieved by the soul, and so it has a beginning. And that which has a beginning must have an end too. Further, the various actions that lead the souls to

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salvation cease to continue the moment the soul achieves salvation. In other words, such actions also have an end; and actions which end somewhere cannot lead the soul to ended salvation. According to the *Vedic* concept, the state of salvation lasts for *an anaanta kaala* i.e., hundred times the time taken for creation. One creation lasts for four hundred Crores of years; hundred times that means forty hundred Crores of years. It is no small achievement for a soul, especially as it is finite in nature and as all its capacities conditioned by this instinct nature of special finitude. It would be wrong to ask why there should be all these endeavors and exacting spiritual practices for the achievement of a state, which after all, is not eternal and ends somewhere?

It is a fallacy to believe that the soul merges totally and inseparably in *Brahman* or the universal spirit, completely losing its individual identity forever; for firstly, there can be no additions to the ever-unchanging and substantially-perfect supreme spirit; and secondly, if the soul ceases to retain its individuality, there will be no one left to enjoy the bliss; the fruit of all spiritual practices and penance.

This aspect of *Moksha* may sound peculiar to most readers; but it is the only sensible, rational concept of salvation; and the Veda, the divine revelations, upholds this proposition. Qualifying words like *Amrita, Akshata* (immortal and undeceiving) as related to *Moksha* or salvation, apply only to the long period of the time that is taken by the state of salvation to end.

Law of Karma

Law of *Karma* is one of the most influential doctrines of Hinduism which controls the action of individuals. The word *Karma* has many meanings. In this context *Karma* means action or activity that an individual performs in a particular context. Here it is taken to be synonymous with fate or destiny. The doctrine of Law of *Karma* teaches that nothing happens by accident. Every thing that happens, however great or small it may be is the outcome of previous cause. Thus, it lays the foundation of cause and effect doctrine. According to this doctrine, man is not a creature bound in inexorable and pre distined fate which he is helpless to avoid. But is the master of his destiny. So he has the power and the right of free will. Neither the will of god, nor faith is the cause of man's suffering. The law of *Karma* is the controller of justice. It operates in perfectly precise manner. It does not leave any thing to chance. In this

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sense *Karma* has a three fold aspect-

- Accumulations of effects of past *Karma* called *Sanchita Karma.*
- The *Karma* which comes to us in the form of experience in the present life is called *Prarabdha Karma* and
- All these actions and experiences sow seeds of fresh *Karma* in future, this is called *Agami Karma.*

All creatures are involved in an action without any break continuously since one *Karma* leads to the other. That is, our present actions are decided by our past *Karma* and the present *Karma* contains the seeds of our future notions. *Agami Karma* is the manifested organ state of deed done in thought, work and physical body. It is gross *Karma.* Merits and demerits resulting from deeds are called *Sanchita,* the subtle *Karma.* Pleasure and pain resulting from merit and demerit are called *Prarabdha Karma,* very subtle *Karma.*

Karma is like cultivation. *Agami Karma* is compared to the act of sowing seed. *Sanchita Karma* is compared to the state of seed lying buried under earth till it gets maturation to come out. *Prarabdha Karma* is compared to the emergence of sprout from the seed.

Law of *Karma* has two parts. The first part of the law states that the past determines the present. What we experience now is the result of our past action. This is only one part of law. The second and significant part of the law states that the future is determined by our present action.

Past, present and future are continuous law of *Karma* even though it limits our freedom in certain aspects, also provides room for our freedom, to understand the nature of the law of *Karma* and grace, we need to understand the *Sanchita, Prarabdha* and *Agami Karma. Sanchita* is one's total *Karma. Prarabdha* is a part of the *Sanchita Karma* which pertains to the present birth. *Prarabdha Karma* can be destroyed only by experiencing. *Agami Karma* can be stopped when we get knowledge and act accordingly. God wants us to grow spiritually and this could be possible only when we eschew desire and aversion.

When good and bad incidents occur to us, we should remember that the occurrence is the result of our past deeds. When we get spiritual maturity, we know the art of responding to the life situations without adding to our stock of *Karma.* If we maintain our spiritual

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maturity, our *Prarbdha Karma* may be gradually reduced and finally eliminated. When we get spiritual maturity and act accordingly, God comes as a preceptor and destroys the whole *Sanchita Karma*. *Sanchita* may be large for a particular person. It may not be so for another person. But God sees the individual attaining spiritual maturity and removes *Sanchita* irrespective of the quality and quantity of *Karma* performed by the individual. Destruction of *Sanchita Karma* gives place for the operation of grace. Law of *Karma* is consistent with the law of grace.

We may explain this with an example. Law of gravitation is applicable only to a certain extent. After a certain-level, gravitation will not operate. In the same way when one's understanding transforms the behavior of the individual law of *Karma* is applicable. If the person understands god's essential nature and act accordingly, *Karma* which is the result of ignorance, will no longer be attached to the individual. If the person learns to transcend the law of *Karma* by his actions, the grace of the Lord descends on the individual and his whole life is transformed as a result of the descent of the grace of the Lord. Law of *Karma* and law of grace are applicable to the individual as per the spiritual maturity of the person.

Now the question arises whether the soul experiences the fruits of *Karma* in the order of things done. As already noted, *Karma* is like cultivation. As in cultivation some kinds take a longer time to grow and bear fruits than others. So also some deeds take a longer time to bear fruits than others. It should be noted that the deeds become converted into effects only according to the maturation of them. The maturation consists in a deed becoming perfect in all its requirement, which are instrumental to it.

Some times it so happens that a person may not experience the fruits of his actions before the end of his life. In such cases the theory of *Karma* becomes futile. To avoid such futility exponents of law of Karma argue that *Karma* binds the soul more then the material body. If the soul does not experience the fruits of its actions through this body in this life, then it would experience them in subsequent births. This leads to the theory of transmigration of soul or rebirth.

Some of the schools of Indian philosophy have made God regulator of the law of *Karma,* who can release the soul from the *Karmic* bondage. Some other systems give independent status to law of *Karma* without

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the interference of God. This theory of law of *Karma* has worked as a regulative principle of the actions of the people.

Yoga

Yoga means union, it is union of man and the whole of humanity; to the mystic, between his lower and higher self; to the lover, union between himself and god of love; and to the philosopher, it is union of all existence. This is what is meant by yoga. This is a Sanskrit term, and these four divisions of Yoga have, in Sanskrit, different names. The man who seeks this kind of union is called a Yogi. The worker is called the Karma-Yogin. He who seeks the union through mysticism is called the Raja-Yogi. And he who seeks it through love is called the Bhakti-Yogi. He who seeks it through philosophy is called the Jnana-Yogi. So this word Yogi comprises them all (Swami Vivekananda 2004:43-58).

Raja-Yoga

Let us now understand what Rajayoga means. Is this controlling of the mind? In this country it is associating all sorts of hobgoblins with the word Yoga. One must start by telling that it has nothing to do with such things. None of these Yogas give up reason, none of them asks you to be hoodwinked, or to deliver reason into the hands of priests of any type whatsoever. None of them asks that it should give allegiance to any superhuman messenger. Each one of them tells us to cling to the reason, to hold fast to it. In all beings there are three sorts of instruments of knowledge. The first is instinct, which may find in most highly developed animals; This is lowest instrument of knowledge. What is the second instrument of knowledge? Reasoning. We may find that it is highly developed in man. Now in the first place, instinct is an inadequate instrument; To animals, the sphere of action is very limited, and within that limit instinct acts. When we observe man it is largely developed into reason. The sphere of action also has here become enlarged. Yet even reason is still very insufficient. Reason can go only a little way and then it stops. It cannot go any further; and if tried to push it, the results is helpless confusion, reason itself becomes unreasonable. Logic is nothing but argument in a circle. It is the very basis of perception. Matter and force. What is matter? That which is acted upon by force. And force? That which acts upon matter. What the logicians call see-saw, one idea depend on the other and this again depending on that. Find a mighty barrier before reason, beyond which reasoning cannot go yet it

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always feels impatient to get into the reasoning go; yet it always feels impatient to get into the region of the infinite beyond. This world, this universe which our senses feel our mind thinks, is but one atom, so to say, of the infinite, projected on to the plane of consciousness; and within that narrow limit, defined by the network of consciousness, works our reason, and no beyond. Therefore, there must be some other instrument to take us beyond, and that instrument is inspiration. So instinct, reason, and inspiration are the three instruments of knowledge. Instinct belongs to animals, reason to man and inspiration to God men. But in all human beings inspiration is in a more or less developed condition. The germs of all these three instruments of knowledge. To have these mental instruments evolved, the germs must be there. And this must also be remembered, that one instrument is a development of the other, and therefore does not contradict it. It is reason that develops into inspiration and therefore inspiration does not contradict reason, but fulfills it. Things which reason cannot get at are brought to light by inspiration; and they do not contradict reason. The old man does not contradict the child. Therefore we must bear in mind that the great danger lies in mistaking the lower from of instrument the higher. Many times instinct is presented before the world as inspiration, and then come all the superiors' claims for the gift of prophecy. A fool or a semi-lunatic thinks that the confusion going ion in his brain is inspiration, and he wants men to follow him. The most contradictory, irrational nonsense that has been preached the world is simply the instinctive jargon of confused lunatic brains trying to pass for the language of inspiration.

The first test of true teaching must be that the teaching should not contradict reason. Such is the base for Yogas. Raja-Yoga; the psychological Yoga, the Psychological way to union. It is a vast subject; it can only point out to the central idea of this Yoga. We have but one method of acquiring knowledge. From the lowest man to the highest Yogi all have to use the same method; and that method is what is called contradiction. The chemist who works in his laboratory concentrates all the powers of his mind, brings them into one focus, as one throws them on the elements; and the elements stand analyzed, and thus his knowledge comes. The astronomer has also concentrated the powers of his mind and brought them into one focus; and throws them on to

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objects, through his telescope; and stars and systems appear and yield their secrets to him. So it is in every case; with the professor in his chair, the student with his book, with every man who is working to know. One may hear words that which interests, mind will becomes concentrated; and then suppose a clock strikes, one will not hear it on account of concentration, and more able to concentrate mind, the better will understand, and the more one concentrate on his love powers the better it shall be able to give expressions to what one want to convey. The more this power of concentration the more knowledge is acquired, because this is the one and only way of acquiring knowledge. Even the lower shoe back. If he gives more concentration will black shoes better; the cook a meal all the better. In making money, or in worshipping God, or in doing anything, the stranger the power of concentration the better will that thing be done. This is the one call, the one knock, which opens the gates of nature, and lets out flood of light. This, the power of concentration, is the only key to the treasurehouse of knowledge. The system of Raja-Yoga deals almost exclusively with this. In the present state of our body we are so much distracted, and the mind is frilter away its energies upon a hundred sorts of things. As soon as it is tried to calm thoughts and concentrate mind upon one object of knowledge, thousands of undesired impulses rush into the brain; thousands of thoughts rush into the mind and disturb it. How to check them and bring the mind under control is the whole subject of study in Raja-Yoga.

Karma-Yoga

Karma-Yoga is the attainment of god through work. It is evident that in society there are many persons who seem to be born for some sort of activity, whose minds cannot be concentrated on the plane of thought alone, and who have but one idea, concertised in work, visible and tangible. There must be a science of this kind of life too. Each one of us is engaged in some work, but the majority of us fritter away the greater portion of our energies because we do not know the secret of work. Karma-Yoga explains this secret and teaches where and how to work, how to employ it to the greatest advantage the largest part of our energies, in the work that is before us. But with this secret we must take into consideration the great objection against work, namely that it causes pain. All misery and pain come from attachment. I want to do work, I want to do good human being; and it is ninety to one that that

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human being, whom I have helped, will prove ungrateful and go against me and the result to me is pain. Such things deter mankind from working; and it spoils a good portion of the work and energy of mankind, this fear of pain and misery. Karma-yoga teaches us how to work for work's sake, unattached, with out caring who is helped, and what for. The Karma-Yogi works because it is his nature, because he feels that it is good for him to do so and he has no objection beyond that. His position in this world is that giving and never cares to receive anything. He knows that he is giving and does not ask for anything in return and therefore he eludes the grasp of misery. The grasp of pain, whenever if comes. Is the result of the reaction of "attachment".

Bhakti-Yoga

Bhakti-Yoga is for the man of emotional nature, the lover. He wants to love god, He relies upon and uses all sorts of rituals, flowers, incenses, beautiful buildings, forms and all such things. Do you mean to say they are wrong? One fact is to be told is good for to remember, in this country especially, that the world's great spiritual giants have all been in possession of very rich mythology and ritual. All sects that have attempted to worship God without any form or ceremony have crushed without mercy everything that is beautiful and sublime in religion. Their religion is a fanaticism at best, a dry thing. The history of the world is a standing witness to this fact. Therefore do not decry these rituals and mythologies. Let people have them; Do not exhibits that unworthy derisive smile, and say, "they are fools; let them have it." Not so; the greatest men seen are the most wonderfully developed in spirituality, they have all come through the discipline of these rituals. It does not hold worthy to sit at their feet, and to criticize them! How do you know that these ideas act upon the human mind, which of them to accept and which to reject? We are apt to criticize everything in the world without sufficient warrant. Let people have all the mythology they want, with its beautiful inspirations; We must always bear in mind that emotional natures do not care for abstract definitions of the truth. God to them is something tangible, the only thing is real; they feel hear and see Him and love. Let them have their God. A rationalist seems to them to be like the fool who, when he saw a beautiful statue, wanted to break it to find out of what material it was made. Bhakti-Yoga teaches them how to love without any ulterior motives, loving god and loving the good because it

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is good to do so, not for going to heaven, not to get children, wealth or anything else. It teaches them that love itself is the highest recompense of love-that God Himself is love. It teaches them to pay all kinds of tribute to God as the creator, the Omnipresent, Omniscient, Almighty ruler, the Father and the Mother. The highest phrase that can express Him, the highest idea that the human mind can conceive of Him is that He is the God of Love. Wherever there is love, it is He. "Wherever there is any love, it is He, the Lord is present there". Where the husband kisses the wife, He is there in the kiss; where the mother kisses the child, He is there in the kiss; where friend clasp hands, He, the Lord, is present as the God of Love. When a great man loves and wishes to help mankind, he is there giving freely His bounty out of His love to mankind. Wherever the heart expands. He is there manifested. This is what the Bhakti-Yoga teaches.

Jnana-Yoga

Jnana-Yogi the philosopher, the thinker, he who wants to go beyond the visible. He is the man who is not satisfied with the little things of this world. His ideas is to go beyond the daily routine of eating, drinking and so on; not even the teaching of thousands of books will satisfy him. Not even all the sciences will satisfy him; at the best, they only bring this little world before him. What else will give him satisfaction? Not even myriads of systems of words will satisfy him; they are to him but a drop in the ocean of existence. His soul wants to go beyond all that into the very heart of being, by seeing reality as it is; by realizing it, by being it, by becoming one with that universal Being. That is the philosopher; to say that God is the Father or the Mother, the Creator of this universe, its protector and Guide is to him quite inadequate to express Him. To him, God is the life of his life, the soul of this soul. God is his own Self. Nothing else remains which is other than God. All the mortal parts of him become pounded by the weighty strokes of philosophy and are brushed away. What at last truly remains is God Himself.

Upon the same tree there are two birds, one on the top, the other below. The one on the top is calm, silent and majestic, immersed on its own glory; the one on the lower branches, eating sweet and bitter fruits by turns, hopping from branch to branch, is becoming happy and miserable by turns. After a time the lower bird eats an exceptionally bitter fruits and gets digested and looks up and sees the other bird, that

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wondrous one of golden plumage, who eats neither sweet nor bitter fruit, who is neither happy nor miserable but calm, Self-centered and seeing nothing beyond his self. The lower bird longs for his condition but soon forgets it, and again begins to eat the fruit, in a little while he eats another exceptionally bitter fruit, which makes him feel miserable, and he again looks, up, and tries to get nearer to the upper bird. Once more he forgets and after a time he looks and so on he goes again and again, until he comes very near to the beautiful bird and sees the reflection of light from his plumage playing around his own body, and he feels a change and seems to melt away; still nearer he comes, and everything about him melts away, and at last he understands this wonderful change. The lower bird was, as it were, only the substantial-looking shadow, the reflection of the higher; he himself was in essence the upper bird all the time, this eating of fruits, sweet and bitter, this lower little bird weeping and happy by turns was a vain chimera, a dream; all along the real bird was there above, calm and silent, glorious and majestic, beyond grief, beyond sorrow. The upper bird is God, the Lord if this universe; the lower bird is the human soul' eating the sweet and bitter fruits of this world. Now and then comes a heavy blow to the soul. For a time he stops the eating and goes towards the unknown God; and flood of light comes. He thinks that this world is a vain show. Yet again the senses drag him down, and he begins as before to eat the sweet and bitter fruits of the world. Again an exceptionally hard blow comes. His heart becomes open again to divine light; thus gradually he approaches God, and as he gets nearer he finds his old self melting away. When he has come near enough, he sees that he is no other than God, and he exclaims, "He whom it is being described as the life of this universe, as present in the atom, and in suns and moons, He is the basis of life, the Soul of soul. Nay, thou art that". This is what Jnan-Yoga teaches. It tells man that he is essentially divine. It show to mankind the real unity of being, and that each one is the Lord, god Himself, manifested on earth. All of us, from the lowest worm that crawls under our feet to the highest beings to whom we look up with wonder and awe, are manifestations of the same Lord.

It is imperative that all these various Yogas should be carried out in practice; mere theories about them will not do any good. First we have to hear about them, then we have to think about them. We have to

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reason the thoughts out, impress them on pour minds, and we have to meditate on them, realize them, until at last they become our whole life. No longer will religion remain a bundle of ideas or theories, an intellectual assent; it will enter into our very self. By means of intellectual assent we may today subscribe to many foolish things, and change our minds altogether tomorrow. But true religion never changes. Religion is realization; not talk, nor doctrine, nor theories however beautiful they may be. It is being and becoming, not hearing, to acknowledging, it is the whole soul becoming changed into what it believes.

Essential features of Hinduism such as *Chatur Varna, Chaturashramas, Purusharthas,* law of *Karma* and *Yogic* systems are discussed elaborately in this chapter to understand the significance of the Hinduism. These essential features have contributed extensively to the growth and sustenance of the Hinduism since ages. Roots of these essential features are traced from the Indus civilization, Vedic and the Epic tradition of India

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CHAPTER- II

ESSENTIAL FEATURE S OF LINGAYATHISM

The present chapter discusses the essential features of Lingayathism in order to establish the independent status and unique nature of its teachings. Following the discussion on the status and the founder of Lingayathism. The chapter tries to discuss its essential features such as the philosophy of Shaktivishishtadvaita, Astavarana, Panchachara, Shatasthala and the worship of Istalinga. Along with these some social innovations of Basaveshwara such as Kayaka, Dashooha and Anubhava Mantapa are discussed which paved the way for both social and gender equality.

Lingayathism is often confused as the part or sect of the Hinduism, because the origin of *Lingayathism* is from the Hindu society. It seems to be so, because the *Lingayathism* has not yet proved its independent existence. Some of the doctrines of Hindu culture are accepted by the *Lingayathism*.

The Status of Lingayath religion

Determining the status of the *Lingayath* religion is a knotty problem, whether it is a independent religion or a sub-religion of Hinduism is the concern of the present study. *Lingayaths* are generally considered to be a sect among the Hindus or a subsect of the Shaivas. *Shaivism* itself is generally considered as *Vedic* religion or a sub-religion of Hinduism. Hence, in the first place it has fallen in such deep obscurity that it seems rather difficult to rouse up from the obscurity. It may naturally claim to have its account of intrinsic value and merit.

To determine the status of *Lingayath* religion among the broad perspective Hinduism, it is necessary for us to know what Hindu religion is which the Hindus as a body social, political and religious are expected to profess and to being. But it is impossible to say what Hindu religion or Hinduism is, if it is to be a common denominator or the highest common factor of all the Hindu communities of India. Generally Hindu religion is taken to be the religion as taught by the *Vedas*. But what is the religion that is taught by the *Vedas*? This is the most puzzling question; and answer to the question is bound to be equally puzzling and controversial. The *Veda* does not teach any one religion but a variety wide of religions; they not only teach some common religious

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philosophy about a variety of philosophy by different schools of philosophical thought; they do not lay down any common religious practice and customs but a multiplicity of rules of religion and custom. It is this variety that has been an object of pride for the Hindus, who say with a sense of elation that Hinduism is a form of eclectic religion having every thing in it. At the most it may be said that the *Vedas*, especially the *Upanishads*, are a literature of profound learning and thoughts being the result of inner spiritual experiences of great ancient sages, regarding the cosmic principle, the cosmic evolution, involution and life, the working of the Universe and the individual souls and advice given to the individual souls to follow a spiritual life to be free from the trammels of the worldly life. But they do not teach any common principles of religion and spiritual life. The four main *Vedas* and the Brahmans mainly elaborate the performance and procedure of sacrifices, though some portions of *RigVeda* contain verses full of deep philosophical thoughts. It is the *Aranyakas* (forest dwelling sages) and the *Upanishads* that contain most vivid and everlasting thought of spiritual experiences and spiritual life. But they do not give any one consistent religion for all to follow. They are merely rich in philosophical speculations and experiences, too obscure to be understood.

Hindu religion is defined as the religion of *Varnashramadharma* which is based on the principle of innate inequality of human beings, and, therefore, lays stress on the inherent incapability of the constituent human beings of the body political and social to have an equal right and share in social and religious practices. The *Varnashramadharma* may be fundamentally reduced to three main characteristics of social and religious-life. 1) The four castes or colors (Varna), 2) the four stages of life (Ashrams).3) and the duties, assigned to the four castes and stages. The third characteristic is further elaborated into 1) different worldly duties assigned to be discharged by the four castes *(Varnadharma)*, 2) and sixteen religious *Samskaras* sacramental rites like *Garbhadan, Punsvan, Jaatkarm, Namkaran* etc. These sixteen sacramental rites are the special privileges of the first three classes. The Shudras, whose duty is only to serve obediently the first three castes like slave, are altogether excluded from the sixteen rites. The exclusion of a particular section of community from these religious rites and its consequent exclusion from intellectual and spiritual life is quite an iniquitous and opprobrious thing

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in the world. It seems that at the beginning members of the community were considered as different castes in accordance with their mental and intellectual caliber and physical fitness for particular worldly duties. Then there was some change in the *Varnashramadharma.* But gradually it was based on birth alone. This made the *Varnashramadharma* the most unjust social institution. Being excluded from the sixteen sacramental rites, the *Shudras* came to be reduced to the status of serfs who served the three upper castes. Another notable thing is that the women of the first three castes were considered equal to *Shudras* in status. And therefore, they were assigned the duties of domestic affairs and of serving their husbands to attain *Mukti*. They are thus considered as merely an object of pleasure and only the means of racepropagation. This is also unequally iniquitous thing. It was not possible to understand the reason of the exclusion of all women from the *Samskaras*. It was not possible (at least for us) to understand the meaning of *Punsvan,* which apparently meant causing the birth of male children. If the *Samskaras* were intended to have only male children and if they were efficient it would amount to say that there would be only males and no females at all. Consequently, there would be no further propagation of the race. The *Lingayath* religion has done away with it and ushered in a new era of socio-religious life. The eradication of *Varnashramadharma* from the new socio-religious system is found in all *Lingayath* religious books. The status of *Lingayaths* as a high class community of *Ativarnashramdharmis* (those above the *Varnashramadharma*) is founding *Veershaivotkarshapradipika* and *Veerashaiva*ndachandrika. The superior status to *Varnashramadharma,* of *Ativarnashramadharm* as a socio-religious system is established.

In short, the *Varnashramadharma* based on birth is iniquitous in so far as it excludes from it a large portion of the community from real religious life; it makes a difference between men and women in religious life; it takes different sacramental rites a close preserve of a particular section of the community. It, in brief shows that the community is merely a socio-political body. Thus Hinduism, if it is *Varnashramadharma,* can in no way include *Lingayathism* in it as a sub-religion. The *Lingayaths* are Hindus in the sense that they are descendents of the Hinduism and that they are not people coming from outside India like Parsies. They are Hindus as a race but not as a religion.

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They are a different religious entity, a distinct religious factor. In this particular aspect they are like Jains, who form a different religious sect. They violently were shattered away, discarding the Hindu religion and forming a separate religion of their own. But Jains differ from *Lingayaths* in one aspect and therefore they are safe in their claims as a different religious community, in respect of not owning their allegiance with the *Vedas* and not owning their faith in them. In this respect, *Lingayaths* differ from Jains, as they seem to respect the *Veda* though they do not own the *Vedas* as the basis of their religion. They profess and own the *Agamas* as they are the base and precursors of their religion. However, their respect for the *Vedas* has made confusion worse confounded and the position and status of the community very anomalous.

Hence idol-worship is a common feature in the religion of the Hindus. If religion can be so defined, *Lingayaths* are not Hindus in religion because they are not idol-worshippers. Only in one respect they are Hindus in religion, namely, in respect of worshipping one of the Hindu Gods, *Shiva*. But mere worship of a God is not religion; it should have philosophy and practice marking its differentia. And because *Lingayath* religion has its own philosophy and practice distinct in itself it cannot be a sub-religion of Hinduism.

After establishment of the religion, the Lingayath community became independent of Hinduism. Questions were raised regarding their status among the Hindus and their religion whatever it was, on account of the new community altogether serving its connection with the Brahmanic priest-hood. The followers of the new religion had to answer the question and ascertain themselves. They tried their best to maintain their positions. Besides, they claimed to be *Aprakrutbrahman*. They had no clear idea of their status as an independent religion. Moreover it seems that they must have thought it honorable not only to be *Brahmins* but Super-Brahamins, which they christened with the name of Aprakritabrahman.

The confusion regarding the status of Lingayathism within Hinduism could have been avoided if it was maintained that they were an independent religious fold without explaining it as *Ativarnashramadharma* or *Aprakritabrahmanadharma*. The explanation maintains the independent status indirectly but not directly. The confusion became much worse later, when support of the

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basic principles of the religion was sought from the *Vedic*, especially *Upnishadic* literature. *Lingadharanachandrika* was one such book. But if the creed, the tenets and principles of the religious are closely studied, it will be clear that the *Lingayathism* fundamentally differs from Hindu religion which eludes definition. The position of Jains and Sikhs is safe as both have thrown off their allegiance to the *Vedas*. All Jains are descendents of Hindus. So also many Sikhs are Hindus. But they have maintained their position clearly by asserting. Their distinctness of creed, tenets and principles. Anyway Lingayaths treated a sure and safe ground if they boldly maintain that Lingayathism is an independent religious entity, inspite of the confusion and dubiousness caused by the trend of discussion noted above regarding the status of *Lingayaths* and their religion *Veershaivanandachandrika* itself maintains in the following words the independent status of the religion.

Lingayathism is an independent religion (Mate Mahadevi 2006): There are some important questions which are raised regarding the status of Lingayathism such as; is the *Lingayath* religion an independent Religion? Or else is it a sect, caste or a group? Does it have features to consider it as independent? If it is independent Religion, and then what are the relations of it with Hindus? Human beings are also common animals who live with natural habits. Religion is the medium to control them by ethical rule. It is considered that some ethical rules and faith which regulate the life of the individuals and society constitites religion.

Religion must have some necessary constituents, such as 1) Religious Preceptor 2) Goal 3) Doctrine of vision 4) Consecration 5) Doctrine of society 6) Ethics 7) Doctrine of economics 8) Law 9) Culture 10) Ritual and 12) Literature.

On the basis of above points the defferences between other religions can be explained. By this view the *Lingayath* Religion is independent Religion because it has all differentiating aspects to be recognized as an independent religion.

Veerashaivism* and *Lingayathism

Present confusion about *Lingayathism* and *Veerashaivism* is so common that, it seems difficult to believe or guess that both are entirely different and both have indefinite differences. The fact concerned is not only with commons, it is indeed with various writers, scholars and dignified personalities. But the ethics, practices, evidences, logic and

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various other factors prove that *Lingayathism* and *Veerashaivism* are entirely different, and they are quite opposite to each other. Isn't it the thing of surprise? Yes it is true. To specify the dependence/ independence of Lingayath religion over Veerashaiva, I feel it is very relevant to resolve the limitations. So now let us study evidences.

Madivala Machideva,We have Linga, We are called Lingavanthas, What can I say to these monkey like men, Repeat going towards worldly (Bhavi) idols of Shaiva, O' Lord Kalideva.

Sharana Madival Machideva a conteporary person to Guru Basaveshwara, who was doing Kayaka (work) of washer man at Kalyana, contributed very significant ethics to the bravest people who struggled and succeeded in the protection of Vachana literature from opponent communal forces during the revolution of Kalyana. He gave very important evidence through the above said Vachana. Leaning towards worldly (Bhavi) Idols of Shaiva is foolishness. Bhavi is the stage of the man without any religious consecration, not having any Samskaras of the religion, totally ignorant about the spiritual aspects. He place Shaiva Idols in to the state of Bhavi. Another important aspect is one who has Linga on his body he alone is considered as Lingayatha and not the one who is born as a Lingayath. He also gave the historical evidence for the name of the religion Lingavantha. We can notice one more thing in this Vachana that the Lingayath faith is being developed from Shaiva. Re adopting the old practice of Shaiva (that is idol worship) will disqualify from the religious followship.

Lingadharanachandrika is a treatise written to establish the principle of creed of wearing Linga on the body by the Veerashaivas or Lingayatas. It prominently explains the followers of Veerashaivism and signifies unmistakably those that wear on their body the holy Linga, that forms the most distinctive and distinguishable religious mark of the followers. The former is coeval with the origin of the religion, whenever it may have been: but it fails to express the distinguishing mark worn on the body by the followers of Veerashaivism. It dismisses them strikingly in contra-diction from all other Shaivas and Shaiva sects of India. The word "Veerashaiva" does not bring out the idea of Linga worn on the body as strikingly as the word "Lingayata" does. The former has been etymologically defined and elaborately explained in treatise and literature of the religion. But the origin of the word "Lingayata" is not

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only obscure but conspicuous by the absence of its explanation in religious literature, and is neither defined nor explained therein. Still it has the very enviable merit of making out the followers of the religion severally and collectively as a religious community.

18. *Namage lingavuntu, Navu Lingavantarendu nudivaru, Matte marali Bhavishaivadaivangaligerguva, E manga manavaranenembenayy,*

Kalidevayya. S V S 8 / 637

19. *M. R. Sahkhare, History and Philosophy of Lingayata religion. Page 1-10*

It is no wonder, therefore, that the term "Lingayata" should have been more common since some past time and long enough, and should express not only a member of the community but also the distinctive mark of the faith that makes the community a distinct religious entity. It connotes the most distinctive and characteristic feature of the religion, nay the very heart and soul of the religion, namely, the creed of wearing Linga on the body, and denotes that such are the followers of faith and such is the community, History and Philosophy of Lingayat Religion in short and distinguishes from other religious communities or sects of India. The term "Veerashaiva" is significant and looms large in religious tracts and literature to the total exclusion of "Lingayata" but is less common in ordinary language.

The word "Lingayata" has been spoken of derisively by a person, who makes no secret of his intentions, and has been slightingly compared to words like "Bagayata' (garden land) and the like. This is but mere mockery and impious and irrelevant language. Whatever and whenever may be the origin of the word, it is seen that it has attained the full religious and communal signification and significance. One may feel sorry that the word should be so mocked at and tossed about in the spirit of contempt and satire. It is palpably renegade like to do so. One may not like it but one cannot help the lolling tongue of scandal. But the word has not the misfortune of being left alone to be treated so slightingly. It had its stalwart defenders and exponents. A learned gentleman explained the word, in sharp report, grammatically and justified its significance and popularity. The word "Lingayata", he says, is a Sanskrit word. It is delivered, he explains, from the constituents, Linga and ayata or linga-Aa-yat.

The above explanation is convincing and speaks about the scholarship of the gentleman and it cannot be taken exception to,

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except by petty-fogging spirits. All the same an explanation of this kind has not been found in treatises of the past times. The explanation has been original and given for the first time. And it may be accepted in authority hereafter, as it will attain confirmation and sanctity of age in due course. But so far as our knowledge of existing Sanskrit works of Veerashaiva religion are concerned. The learned gentle man is conscious of himself and admits that the explanation given above has been his own attempt to prove that the Sanskrit word is grammatically formed. He, therefore, remarks "After the word has been established in the foregoing to be a Sanskrit word grammatically formed, there remains no ground for any body to ask for its occurrence in books of past times, for the simple reason that its use at present is proof enough of its use in the past. Grammar and the explanation of the grammatical formation of a word is sufficient to prove, whether the word is Tatsama (loan-word), Tadbhava (modified-word), Deshya (original Kanarase or indigenous word), Annyaadesha (foreign word), or Gramya (Slang). Now that we have established the word to be Sanskrit word, the disputant cannot say that the word is not a Sanskrit word unless and until he successfully disproves it".

After stating the polemic about the word, we would like to give our opinion and explanation of the origin and growth of the word into its wide popular use. We think that the word is one of the conventional growth. It is based on the psychology of the people to have a word expressing an object, short, simple, and connotating the inner meaning of the object for which it stands. The people expect that the inner meaning of the object should flash forth and the object should throb into their minds as soon as the word expressing the object is uttered. The word "Veerashaiva" failed to satisfy such expectation of the people. It denotes, as it does now, simply some name of Shiva. But it did not connote in any way the prominent and the only characteristic, namely, the holy Linga worn on the body. Linga worn on the body is the visible sign and a distinctive mark of being a Veerashaiva. But the word "Veerashaiva" by itself does not and did not bring out the idea of the mark. Men had and have to pause and think before they comprehend the characteristic mark. But having no patience to do so, they are busy in finding out a new word, as a short cut, to understand the characteristic features of Linga, to they are not only less prominent but also common

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to other Shaivas, namely, Vibuti and Rudrakshi. But Linga is the only special mark of Veerashaiva. How Ling is to be expressed and understood easily? The method of solving the problem is simple. The possessive Sanskrit affix Katt is there. And the word Lingayat, like Bhagavat, Dhanvant, and a host of others, must have attained popularity in a very short time, as it expressed both the distinctive mark and the possessor of the mark. Dhanvant expresses the possessor of Dhan and conveys easily and prominently both the characteristic, namely, Dhan and its possessor. In the same way the concept Lingayat also conveys the same. As soon as it is uttered it conveys the distinctive mark and its wearer. Lingavan is the nominative singular of Lingavant the uninflected form Pratipadak, and expresses a single individual wearing Linga; and Lingavantaha is the nominative plural of Lingavant and expresses many individuals wearing Linga or the whole host of Linga-wearers or the members of the Lingayatha community. It is very common and customary to use plural as a mark of honour, when a single individual is addressed or spoken. The use of plural with reference to a single individual includes courteous refined manners. Hence Lingavanta must have been more common than the singular Lingavan, as it is civil and respectful when used with reference to a single individual but it is necessary, when used with reference to many or the whole community. The Sanskrit words Lingavan and Lingavanth must have been first used by the few, educated in Sanskrit, but in course of a very short time it must have come to be used by the ordinary folk and attained relevance in the general public, on account of its connotive merit. The language of the ordinary folk being Kannada, Lingavan and Lingavantha, and more probably the latter, must have assumed the form of Lingayat, a Tadbhav word, a class of words of the Kannada language. The word Lingayat thus seems to be a word of conventional growth. This is our explanation, though we cannot quote an authority any explanation given in books of past times. We are responsible for it, whatever may be the truth in it and whatever may be the merits or demerits in it, though it seems to be the truth. And we may repeat the words of the learned gentleman, mutatis mutandis. "After the word is established as forgoing to be a word of conventional growth as a Tadbhav word, there is no ground for any body to ask for its occurrence in books of past times, for the simple reasons that its use at present is proof enough of its use in the past. Explanation

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of a word, as being a word of conventional growth, is sufficient to prove that it is a Tadbhav word conventionally derived from a Sanskrit word. The disputant cannot now say that it is not so, unless and until he successfully disproves it".

There is another reason why the word "Lingayata" is to be used in preference to the word "Veerashaiva". The words Lingayata and Veerashaiva are neither coextensive nor convertible, though they look so. In a way "Veerashaiva" is more extensive and genus, the word "Lingayata" is less extensive and species. The former is more extensive and a genus, because it includes within its fold the Aaradhyas, who form a class or community, a small community mostly found in Telgu districts. "Lingayata" is a species and less extensive, because it does not include within its fold the Aaradhyas who call themselves Veerashaivas and not Lingayaths. They are a small sect of sub sect of Veerashaiva and not they do not profess and practice Shatsthala and Ashtavarana, the creed of Veerashaivism or Lingayathism, and profess and practice in addition to Varnashramadharma of Hindus and Hinduism. They wear on their bodies Linga and also the sacred thread. They retain some of the Brahminical sixteen Samskaras like Punsvan, Simantonnayan and others, which are tabooed from the Veerashaiva creed.

In short, if the real religion, the real Veerashaiva religion, is to be understood, it comes to be understood as Shaktivishisthadwait, Shatsthala, and Ashtavarana and neither more nor less. And this aspect of the religion and the whole aspect including the Panchacharas (five fold code of Life) and Trishashtisheelas (thirty three rules of daily conduct) is better expressed and unfolded by 'Lingayathism' and the follower is better expressed by 'Lingayata'. It is to be understood that whenever the word Veerashaiva and Veerashaivism, and Lingayata and Lingayathism, are used in these pages, they are used as coextensive and convertible terms as exclusive of Aradhyas.

Shaivism and Veerashaivism

Veerashaiva is from other Shaivas-and Veerashaivism is a division or subdivision of Shaivism. Veerashaivas form a section of the Shaiva sectors and Veerashaivism form a species of Shaivism, though an integral and distinct part of it, the word Veer prefixed to 'Shaiva', makes the whole distinction, and is intended for making the whole distinction and is elaborately explained in various ways. That makes Veerashaism a

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distinct religious entity. The concept that Veerashaivism is a distinct religious entity and the Lingayata community is a distinct religious community will be vindicated and proved later, so that Veerashaivism deserves to be counted and mentioned along with other major religions of the world. It will sufficient here to state the relation between Shaivism and Veerashaivism to show that Veerashaivism is grown out of Shaivism and made itself so though unfortunately, Veerashaivism or the religion of the Lingayata is the least known religion, for reasons that will be noted further in a relevant section.

Shaiva and Veerashaivas have something in common but differ so widely in other vital matters. They stand on a different level altogether and some thing common comes to be obscured largely. Thus Shaivism is the background of Veerashaivism that forms the open entity, the thing, common to both Shaiva and Veerashaivas is the God head or Upasyadevata. Moreover the idea of the deity at the bottom of the universe created protected and reabsorbed by the deity, the idea of deity as the cosmic principle and spirit, evolving the Universe, involving the universe into itself and transcending over the Universe, is the common ground on which both Shaivism and Veerashaivism stand. Here ends the common ground, though there are some other things common to both like Vibhuti, Rudraksh, and Mantra. But these also differ in their relation to other things in the system of their religious practices. In short the deity and the broad philosophical interpretation of the worshipping of the deity in cosmogony and the re absorption of the Universe into the deity is what forms the common principle and common ground of the meeting of the two. In other aspect of the methods of attaining final (the whole called the religious practice), in respect of spiritual practices for the culture of individuals, in respect social practice they differ so widely that they bifurcate and stand on a different level. However there can be no gain saying the fact that Veerashaivism has grown out of Shaivism. And to understand how Veerashaivism has evolved or grown out of Shaivism, historical study its growth and development in the proper perspective, and to understand the scripture and religious literature common to both and peculiar to both, it is indispensable to study and trace the growth of Shaivism historically. To this, therefore, we now turn; because this is as much necessary, as it is to understand the foreground equally well.

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Founder of Lingayathism

In the contemporary time Scholars like M. Chadand Murthy (2006) and Sri Madh Rambhapuri Jagdguru express their scepticism regarding the founder of *Lingayathism*. They argue that Basaveshwara is not the founder of *Lingayathism*. They argue that there is nothing that is new in *Lingayathism* and its ethics. The equality, *Kayaka* and the worship of Lord Shiva in the form of *Linga* all are having their bases in *Sanatana* Dharma of Hinduism. Hence, they argue Basaveshwara did not found any religion and in fact *Lingayathism* is only an offshoot of Hinduism.

The arguments of above scholars are only half true. *Lingayathism* has drawn substantially from the existing *Sanatana* Dharma of Hinduism. But it also has radically differed from Hinduism, in terms of giving optimum stress on the practice of the ethical principles and the social ideas.

Confusion regarding the founder of Lingayath religion became so strong that the majority of the society and even the Lingayaths are in a dilemma regarding Guru Basaveshwara as its founder because they are unaware of the ethics, history, practices of Lingayath religion. It is very important to know about the founder. But unfortunately same is being neglected, misguided and misled preachers, as well as prjudiced minded persons who intend to grow personally on the name of religious organization(misuse of vote bank in their favour), and narrow minded communal powers. The Lingayath religion has two enemies one is external enemy. Another and powerful one is internal enemy. Jealousy against Guru Basava is being developed by some priests. As their ancient forefathers preached the Dharma, Guru Basaveshwara headed that and got name and fame. Panchacharis donot importance to Basaveshwara.

Basic concepts of the Lingayath religion to strengthen and propagate have turned back to harm same religion. Hiremallur K. Ishwaran in his book Lingayatha Dharma: Ondu Adhyayana: furnishes the information "At the time of Basaveshwara *Jangama* was one who did his duty of *Jangama* willingly and became so. But at present *Jangama* is one who takes birth in *Jangama* caste. Shivayoga Mandira has played major role in dividing *Jangama* by giving education to *Jangamas* by birth.

Hazardous situation is created relating to the founder of the

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Lingayath religion. Prof: V. V. Sangamad discusses the problem regarding the founder of Lingayath religion. He is of the opinion that. This is the cause to divide society into Guru-Virakta and Bhakta-Jangama.

All the divisions have become obstacles for unity and development. Without solving this there is no future for Lingayath society. The society is facing severe problems in ethics, religious, social, education, cultural, economical and political fields. And it has lost position at national level. The community has spread over south India Karnataka, in Maharastra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala. In North Jain religion has spread over Gujrat and Rajasthan, Sihkism in Panjab, Bouddhas are found in Uttar Pradesh. By the view of nationality these religions are smaller than Lingayath and have spread only in particular states. They are more highlighted at national level than the Lingayath which is followed merely by the people of southern India. According to the ethics and history, Lingayath religion is superior to the other religions. Its status at international level is nothing but dream!

Founded in 12th century it was national level religion. It lost national level existence in 19-20th century due to conspiracy family priest (purohits). Survival of Lingayath religion and community is the question of Lingayaths only. For the sake of humanity, Lingayaths must develop broad mindedness. Kayaka, Dasoha, castelessness are the three objects of this religion. There is no

20. Hiremallur K. Ishwaran. Lingayatha Dharma : Ondu Adhyayana * Page 161, **165
21. V. V. Sangamad. Basavannanavru Lingayath Dharma Samsthapakaru (Basavanna the founder of Lingayath religion), Page 1.

future for the religion if the three tenets are not brought in to practice by every one of the society. This religion contains world wide theme of all Yogas and all Darshans. that's why it is to be practiced worldwide. The aim of world wide propagation is being hindered due to lack of unity among Lingayaths.

Some powers of religions, social, political writers are arguing that this (controversy of founder) is not related to religion. This problem should not come in the way of the progress of the religion.

Generally the religion is known after the name of its founder or its major ethics. So in Lingayath religion also we find joint venture of foundation of Lingayath religion and invention of the Istalinga. The

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Istalinga is the central point of the ethics, celebrity, worship, identity. Name of the religion, practices, and medium to practice equality, emancipation of women, universal fraternity, symptom of the Lingayath religion and each every aspect is related to Lingayaths. As Lingayath religion starts with the Istalinga Deeksha religious consecration) Linga + Ayata. It will conclude with Istalinga at death by name Lingaikya (one ness with God). So it plays a very significant role to define/decide both. Founder of Istalinga is nothing but founder of the Lingayath religion.

Clarification through Vachana literature

Guru Basaveshwara is the inventor of Guru, Linga, Jangama, Prasada Etc Madival Maachideva "Basavanna is reason for Guru, Basavanna is reason for Linga, Basavanna is reason for Jangama, Basavanna is reason for Prsada, Basavanna is reason for seven worlds, Basavanna is reason for Lord Kalideva, Madivala Machideva was the conyemporary Sharana of the Guru Basaveshwara. In the above Vachana he specifies Basaveshwara invented Guru (preceptor), Linga, Jangama (Priest), Prasada (Grace of God, holy food, Phala/return for the good deed) and even seven worlds.

In another Vachana Madivala Machideva witnessed the historical truth in a beautiful manner along with other essential aspects. " wherever we see we find Basava as creeper, If seen it near by find bunch of Linga, If squeezed find juice of devotion, Basava is behind adoption (Ayata), realizations (Swayata) and understating (Sannihita), Basava is behind formation of guru, Linga, Jangama, Padodaka, and Prasada, You may enquire here, you may enquire there, Devotion without chanting Basava is nothing but nil, O Lord Kalideva.

22. *Basavanna madalikke guruvayittu, Basavanna madalikke Lingavayittu, Baavanna madalikke Jangamavayittu, Basavanna madalikke Prasadavayittu, Basavanna madalikke erelulokavayittu, Basavannanindada Kalidevayya. SVS 8/682, V No 245*
23. *Ettate nodiadattatta Basavanemba balli, Etti nodidade Lingavemba gonchalu, Vatti hindidade Bhaktiembarasavayya, Aayatavu Basavannaninda, Swayat Basavannaninda, Sannihitavu Basavannaninda, Guru Basavannaninda, Linga Basavannaninda, Jangama Basavannaninda, Padodaka Basavannaninda, Prasada Basavannaninda, Atta ballade nivu kelire, etta ballade nivu kelire, Basava Basava Basava endu, majjankkereyadavana bhakti, Shunya kana Kalidevaradeva S V S 8/ 526, No89*

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"Guru Basaveshwara is the founder of lingayath religion by inventing Istalinga; Chenna Basavanna. "There is a saying that Basaveshwara is beginner (Aadi), Linga existing from eternity (Anadi), Linga is beginner (Aadi), Basavanna is senior to Linga (Anadi), Linga is born in the stomach of Basavanna, Jangama is born in the stomach of Basavanna, Prasada is born in the stomach of Basavanna, I came to notice, Basavanna is the only cause for this three fold ethics, O Lord Koodalachennasangamadeva.

Like wise a number of Vachanas written by a number of Sharana/Sharanes confirm and he is the founder of the Lingayath religion. The truth that the inventor of Istalinga is Guru Basaveshwara.

Now let us see the evidence belonging to the time, after the life span of Basaveshwara. Following historical evidences clarify that Lingayath Religion is found by Guru Basaveshwara.

Poet Harihara (Hampe)1195A.D

Palkurike Somnath (1200 A.D., in the Telgu language)

Chamarasa-Prabhulinga Leele (1400)

Mayidevaprabhu (Magge)[1430]

Chaturmukha Bommarasa [1500 A.D]

Gubbiya Mallanaraya-Gururja Charite [1650 A. D]

Maritontadarya [1560 A. D]

Virupaksh Pandit- Channabasava Purana [1585 A. D]

Lakkanna Dandesh-Shivatatva Chintamani[1428A.D]

Gururaj [15th Century](Sanskrit language)

Maritontdarya[16th Century] (Sanskrit language)

Keladi's Basavaraj (Sanskrit language)

Hiremalluru Eshwaran clearly denied that there was Lingayathism before Guru Basaveshwara. Prof: V. V. Sangamad in his book Basavannanavaru Lingayath Dharma Samsthapakaru (Basavanna the founder of Lingayath religion) states that eminent persons belonging to the present time endorse the view that Basaveshwara is the founder of Lingayath religion.

1) Dr. Pavate Sidramappa

2) Sri Hardekar Manjappa

24. *Aadi Basavanna, anaadi Lingavendembaru, Husi, husi E nudiaya kelalagadu, Aadi Linga, anadi Basavannanu, Lingavu Basavannana*

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udardalli huttitu, Jangamau Basavannana udaradalli huttitu, Prasadavu Basavannananu anukarisalayittu, Inti trividhakke Basavannane karanavendaridenayya, Koodalachenna Sangamadeva.. SVS 3/ VNo5

25. *S. Munavalli. "The Veerashiava Religion its practices and principles", Page 36,*
26. *Hiremalluru Eshwaran "Lingayath Dharma; Ondu Adhyana", Page 85.*
27. *V.V.Sangamad. Basavannanavaru Lingayath Dharma Samsthapakaru (Basavanna the founder of Lingayath religion) Page21,*

1) Sri Uttangi Channappa,
2) Sri Halepete Chinatmani,
3) Sri M. R. Srinivasmurty,
4) Sri A. N. Krishna Rao,
5) Sri R. R. Divakar, Patil Puttappa,
6) Dr. Siddayya Puranik,
7) Dr. D. Javaregouda,
8) Sri G. M. Patil Rtd Library officer Dharwad University and etc.

Existence of Lingayath religion was not at all found in any part of India and in literature of any language before 12th century. We can find such evidences in and after 12Th century only. So there is no any other way then to arouse Guru Basaveshwara is the founder of Lingayath religion and its literature.

Dr. P. B. Desai in his book "Basaveshwara and his times" concluded by the study of various sources like stone scriptures, Puranas, Kavya, Vachana literature that Basaveshwara is the founder of Lingayath religion.

In the book 'Yuga Yatr Bharatiya Samskriti' Published of University of Mysore also confirms that Basaveshwara is founder of Lingayath religion.

Dr. H. Tipperudraswami, Dr.M.Chidanadmurty, and Shri Shanatarasa and others cannot say who is the founder of Lingayathism clearly. Before Basava Jedar Dasimayya, Kondaguli Kesiraja etc., had proponed the beginning of the religion.

However we will find some writers intend to specify Guru Basaveshwara did not found any religion. They are of the opinion that Basaveshwara brought some reformation in Lingayathism.

On pursuing the situation, Guru Basaveshwara encouraged a marriage between Brahmin bride and an untouchable bridegroom. He

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crossed the caste barrier of Verna. At the enquiry of Kings Court contending parties were questioned who permitted them to cross the caste barrier?

We can catch a very important point in this event. If they were followers of the caste system, then what was reason (why they dare to) undergo into inter caste marriage, And how one can accept that Guru Basaveshwara abide the same existing religion and how he insisted a new religion. By this we can decide that the new faith of Guru Basaveshwara came into existence as counter action against the Hindu casteism. The new faith incepted by Guru Basaveshwara is nothing but Lingayath religion.

For instance the principle of *Kayaka* which is used to cut the social and economical inequalities is a very significant contribution of *Lingayathism*; along with this there are specific unique practices that were introduced by Basaveshwara into *Lingayathism* such as *Panchachara*, *Astavarana*, *Shatasthala*, *Anubhava Mantapa*, which established independent status of *Lingayathism*. This use of the forgotten doctrines in vibrant way and innovation of new and unique practices which caused the origin of new socio religious movement called *Lingayathism* proves the status Basaveshwara as the founder of a new unique and independent religion called *Lingayathism*.

Life and times of Basaveshwara

28. *Ibid Page 18*
29. *Ibid Page 20*
30. *Ibid Page no 2*
31. *Taralabalu Jagadguru Sri Shivakumar Shivacharya. "Vachanas of Basavanna" (collection of Vachanas Basaveshwara rendereded to English), Page 15-19,*

Basaveshwara was the only son of Madarasa and Madalambika a distinguished and devout Shaiva couple of Bagewadi, a small town near modern Bijapur in Karnataka State (South India). He was born during the beginning of the twelfth century A. D. and lived, perhaps till the end of that century (Shivakumar, 1967:15-19).

His parents were ardent followers of the Vedic religion. They had their own way of worship, beliefs and traditions. But Basavanna even while he was a young boy, somehow, developed as aversion for the Brahminical rites which involved the sacrifice of animals. Divisions of

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the society into several classes on the basis of the birth of an individual did not convince him. He was very unhappy to see that the only so called superior class had the right to perform certain rites and not others. So, he left his parents and his relations out of sheer disgust even while he was in his teens. He went to a Shaiva teacher at Kudala Sangama a sacred place where two big rivers Krishna and Malaprabha meet each other. The philosophy of the Shaiva saint must have been of a progressive nature so as to catch the imagination of this blooming genius.

Basaveshwara was invited to serve in the Court of king Bijjala. He accepted the invitation. Bijjala, a Kalachuri Prince was ruling the Thrdewadi province from Mangalawada at that time. Baladeva Dannayaka one of the ministers of Bijjala, got his daughter Gangambika wedded to him. Gangambika proved a worthy wife to Basavanna in all respects.

By his selfless service, honesty and integrity, Basavanna won the admiration of the King Bijjala. In due course he became the custodian of the King's treasury. A few years later, Bijjala began to rule from Kalyana after overthrowing the Chaluklya emperor. Basavanna also went over to Kalyana and continued as a minister under Bijjala.

Basaveshwara invented Lingayathism based on freethinking, universal fraternity, equality, and all round developing ethics. He started to propagate the Lingayath religion from Kalyana.

Kalyana, a famous historical city situated in modern Bidar District of Karnataka State is witness of Lingayath movement under the dynamic leadership of Basavanna. A great social and religious reformer as he was set to work with unflinching zeal to eradicating the social and religion inequity in Hindu society at that time. He preached that all men are brothers, bad conduct is low caste, food conducts is high caste and religion is the birthright of every body. These doctrines of liberty, equality and brotherhood were quite new to common man of the land. It was a great boon to them, particularly women who were thrown in to the dark corner. This is the first prophet perhaps, to extol the dignity of manual labor, since he advocated the equality of all professions. These factors, beside his official position, charity, piety and learning made his new creed very popular.

The movement became well-known throughout the length and breadth of Karnataka and even beyond. There was ready and hearty

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response from every nook and corner of the country. Spiritual aspirants from different parts of the country who came under the influence of his profound teachings, clustered around him.

Allama Prabhu, Channabasavanna, Akkamahadevi, Akkanagamma, Moligeya Maraih and a host of others, both men and women coming from various strata of the society worked with him. It is this great galaxy that made the city of Kalyana memorable in the history of Karnataka and created the ever Anubhava Mantapa a congregation of the great saints and mystics. Shunya *Shimhasana*, the sacred seat of the Holy order was established in the Mantapa.

Anubhava Mantapa, the temple of religious experience was not built of stones bricks and mortar. The Shunya Simhasana which Allama is said to have adored is not made of precious metals, pearls or stones. It was a conflagration of the highest spiritual wisdom and a centre of divine awareness which could serve as spiritual illumination for all time to come.

Hundreds of saints, both men and women contributed their intuitive experience to the Anubhava Mantapa the fountain of divine experience. They gave utterance to their spiritual experiences which were so original and unique that they were reduced to writing in simple and chaste Kannada. These writings in the style of poetic prose come to be called as Vachana. Till then, no prophet tried to teach in Kannada language of the people of Karnataka. Vachanas, as they were in simple and guanine Kannada made an unprecedented influence on Kannadigas. They enraptured the hearts of thousands of Kannadigas and the movement became very popular and powerful in a very short time. Nobody, not even Bijjala, the monarch at that time could not control this powerful movement.

Bijjala who had overthrown the Chalukyan ruler and usurped his throne feared that he may suffer the same fate at the hands of Basavanna and his followers. This fear was baseless. But some people who were highly orthodox and others who were aspiring for power fanned the fire of misunderstanding beholden Basavanna and the king. One significant event which was ahead of the time, provided them an opportunity. The celebration of the marriage of the son of an 'untouchable' named Haralayya with the daughter of Madhuvayya s Brahmin! This shook the very foundation of the caste system and was too much to the orthodoxy to tolerate. They pleaded before the King

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that the marriage, unholy and irreligious, was performed at the instance of Basavanna, and goaded him to punish the so called heretics. Of course, both Haralayya and Madhuvayya had been Lingayats. The marriage was just in accordance with the new faith preached by Basavanna who was very highly pleased with it.

Bijjala who was perhaps jealous of the popularity of Basavanna wanted to win the favor of the Orthodoxy and some disgruntled officers who had joined them. He ordered the eyes of the contracting parties to be removed. Basaveshwara interference was of no avail. It is said that the 'criminals were finally executed.

Basaveshwara's gentle heart was filled with grief and remorse. He quietly left Kalyana at once with his followers for Kudala Sangama, wherefrom Basavanna emerged as a great teacher, greeted him with open arms. Probably, one or two years after his return to Kudala Sangama he sought union with the Supreme.

Essential features of Lingayathism

Given the above discussion on the confusion regarding *Lingayathism* and *Veerashaivism,* the founder of *Lingayathism* let us turn our attention to the essential features of *Lingayathism* such as *Shaktivishishtadvaita, Astavarana, Panchachara, Shatasthala, Istalinga, Kayaka and Anubhava Mantapa* one by one.

Shaktivishishtadvaita

Religion may be defined as a system of belief in the superhuman power, which governs the course of the universe and the human life in it, and it is entitled to some form of worship from the human beings for attaining eternal happiness. The system of belief connotes doctrines concerning the relations of the universe Man and God, the superhuman Power, and explains how God, as the Almighty Power, creates, sustains, and destroys or reabsorbs the Universe. They also explain and lay down the procedure and methods of worshipping God for the human beings so that they may be free from the trammels of the worldly life and attain eternal happiness by the grace of God. Thus a religion has two parts (1) the philosophy and (2) the practice. The former explains the work of God with the universe and the latter the way of attaining the grace of God for the liberation and final beatitude. The practice of a religion is based on the philosophy of the religion. Such is the idea of religion for all practical purpose, however functionery it

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may be. The Lingayat religion has both parts in it distinct to itself and can, therefore, claim to be a distinct religion.

The philosophy of *Lingayat*hism is monotheism and is called *Shaktivishishtadvaita*. (Sakhare, 2004:433) It is, adopted from and improved upon *Kashmere Shaivasiddhanata*. Though adopted from the *Kashmere* school of *Shaivism* it is given the distinct name of "*Shaktivishistadvaita*" to give prominence to *Shakti*, the power or Energy of the Lord, *Parama Shiva*(the *Parabrahman*), living in intimate union with him. The intimate union or oneness of *Shiva* and His *Shakti*, as we have already stated, is beautifully expressed by Kalidas in the words. *Shakti Parmeshwar* as intimately one as the words and their senses. Words, divested of their sense, are mere babbles and there can be no word without sense: similarly *Shiva* and *Shakti* cannot be separated from each other; they are inseparable ones. The attributes of Para Brahman, according to *Veda*nta, are *Sat, Chit* and *Ananda*: These are the only three positive qualities that are attributed to Brahman, which can be spoken of in no other positive terms but only in the negative terms as " *Naiti Naiti*" (not this, not that etc.)According to *Shaktivishistadvaita* these three positive qualities of *Parabrahman (Parashiva)* are well expressed in terms of the Lord's self-consciousness As "Aashmi, Prakashe, Nandami" i.e., the Lord is conscious of His being, Shining, and enjoying independently of anything else. Hence he is *Swatantra* and his *Shakti*, in the form of His self-consciousness, is a part and parcel of His Self. *Shiva* is the supreme entity. He is the all-knowing, all-doing, all-sustaining being called *Prakasha*, the serene Lord, all-pervading indivisible and infinite. He, as the underlying reality in everything, is all-transcending. That is to say, His nature is primarily a twofold aspect-an immanent aspect in which he pervades the universe, and a transcendental aspect in which He is beyond all universal manifestations. He is the origin and source of the universe and is the *Parabrahman*, as the *Veda*ntis are pleased to call him. He is*Vimarsharupa*, i.e. he is Self-conscious. The vibration of the perfect egoity is His *Shakti* and through her He holds and visualizes the entire universe of objects as "this is the *Vimarsh*, the Perfect Egoity, is the *Shakti*.

The *Pariahs* of *Paramashiva* is the substratum of His psychic images, the result of His reflection, which are merely its modes or forms. Images, psychic or physical, are due to a stimulus received either from

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external factors or the revived residual traces, as when one imagines of dreams. The mirror is also a substratum of images. But the images reflected in it are merely the effect of external objects that receive light from some other source and not from the mirror itself. A self-luminous jewel shines on some external object and has its image reflected in it. But neither the mirror nor the jewel is conscious either of itself or of the object reflected in itself. Hence the nature of a mirror or a jewel is altogether different from the nature of the Lord's *Prakasha*. All the three can be the substratum of images. The mirror is not self-luminous and, therefore, can not receive the image of an external object in darkness. A jewel is self-luminous but it is not conscious of its capability of receiving images, while the Lord is not only self-luminous but is conscious of His self-luminosity. The mirror and the jewel are, thus, *Jada* or intangible. But the Lord is all intelligent.

1) The *Parabrahman* is *Prakasharupa* 2) He has self-consciousness (*Atmavimarsha, Vimarsha*, or *Paramarsha*). 3) this *Vimarsha* is His *Shakti* 4) And i*ccha*, jnana, *kriya* are the modes of aspects of that *Vimarsha*. The consciousness of the self-luminosity is also called *Prasavi* or *Chaitanya* or merely Chit *Prakash.* This form is the most distinctive aspect of Shiva. There is another difference between the mirror and the jewel and the Lord's *Prakasha*. The former receives images from objects that are external to them. But the Lord being all-inclusive there is nothing external to Him. It is the *Vimarsha* or consciousness of perfect egoity that gives rise to the images, which are, therefore, essentially the same (*samarasyatmaka*) as their substratum, the *Prakasha*. An individual soul has residual traces (*samskara*) of objects external to it and revives those traces. It can also imagine things and can build some grand object by imagining. The Lord, the Universal Consciousness or Self-can similarly imagine or manifest ideally the world of the Universe, just as a *Yogin* creates something and holds it up before the on-looking spectators, which they feel as real as the material world. Thus the world or the universe is the Lord's ideal manifestation or the result of Lord's *Prakasha- Vimarsha*, i.e., the Lord's imagination or reflection or thinking. It is evident that this reflection or idea of the Lord is different from the reflection on a mirror or a jewel. The Lord's reflection is the ideal creation or imagination, just as an individual self's imagination of an object; but the reflection of mirror or a jewel is merely material or

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physical representation of a thing in the mirror or the jewel. The upshot is that *Shaiva* is *Prakasha* and is conscious of His *Prakasha*, which, therefore, is used for that aspect of Shiva which serves as a substratum for all that is manifested ideally, exactly as the *Buddhi* does for the images that an individual builds at the tome of imagination. And *Vimarsha* stands for that aspect, which is simply a power that may be called consciousness (for want of a better word), a power, which gives rise to self-consciousness, will, knowledge, and action (*Iccha, Jnana, Kriya*) in succession and is responsible for selection from what is already within and manifestation of the universe from the material selected at will, as apparently separate from itself. The Lord's self-consciousness, the power of will, knowledge and action may be said to be different aspects of this very *Vimasrsha*. The creation of the universe, therefore, is nothing but an ideal projection of psychic reflection or manifestation. The philosophy of the universe or creation is generally named Realistic Idealism.

The power of Shiva is a assort of reflex relation of self-identity and is never dissociated from him. *Shakti* is unalienated conscious nature of Shiva with all the contents un-manifested. She is, therefore, the divine nature that supplies the ground of Shiva's realization of His own Self. She is illumination independent of all other than its own self, which is but the power of limiting the all-transcending Shiva. Shiva of unsurpassed blissful joy is the enjoyer, and desire and such other contents of His self are His enjoyable. And it is for this reason that He assumes the form of *Shakti*, Hence the whole world of diverse names and forms exists as real only when it has its roots deeply struck in the nature of Shiva, the Supreme Being, and is, therefore, nothing other than the externalization of Self-conscious Shiva as the object of His own enjoyment. *Shakti* in short is *Atmavimarsh* or *Prakashvimarsh* and worked wonders in obedience to Shiva's will, which again is nothing but a phase or mode of His power. She possesses the common nature of Shiva and is styled of the lawfully wedded wife of Shiva acting in perfect accord with her husband's disposition or will. *Vimarsha* or the vibrating power of *Prakash* is *Svatantra* because its existence does not depend on anything else as does will, knowledge and action, each of which depends for its existence upon what immediately precedes. This representation the principal power of the Highest Lord, *Maheshwara,* as the Self is often so called. This includes all other powers which are attributed to the

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Ultimate *Parashiva* or *Parabrahman*. The Universal Consciousness is given different names from different points of view. It is called *Chaitanya* because it is conscious of itself and acts for uniting, separating, and dealing in multifarious ways with what is within, it is called *Spanda* because it vibrates and represents the essential nature of the Universal Consciousness of *ParmaShiva*, which is responsible for the apparent change from the state of absolute unity. It is also, called *Mahasatta* because it is the cause of *Ashraya* (substratum) of all that is said to exist in any form. *Parvak* or *parnad* is another name because is represents the speech in its most subtle form. In short *Prakasha* stands not only for the common substratum of all manifestables and the manifested but also fir the manifestables and the manifested themselves. Therefore when the Ultimate Principle, Shiva, is spoken of as *Prakasha-Vimarshaya* it means that the Ultimate in its aspect of *Prakasha* is both the Universe in either the manifested of the or un-manifested state and its permanent substratum; and that in its aspect as *Vimarsha* it is that power, which is ultimately responsible fro keeping the universe in the state of perfect identity with itself, as at the time of *Mahaprlaya*, and for manifesting it as apparently separate from itself, as at the time of creation.

Vimarsha or the power of Shiva resides in Him, as stated before, in a sort of reflex relation of identity. Power without the wielder of the powers is unimaginable; and there must be some kind of relation between them. The relation of Shiva and His *Shakti* is technically called *Samvaya, Samavaya* means a relation by virtue of which two different things like a substance and an attitude residing on that substance, substance and *Karma*, substance and cause and effect, atoms and particularity appear so unified as to represent one whole. It is, in other words, an inseparable union of essential identity and points to a reality that continues to remain in the character of an undivided organic whole. The two things forming one whole are never joined together. But the idea of separateness exists in human mind only, when one concentrate's analytic though on the compact invisible whole and tries to separate the content from the unified whole by predicating some definite character to it. It is clear from this that Shiva and *Shakti* are one indivisible whole. The Lingayath Philosophers gives a special name *"Samarasya"* to this intimate union. *Samarasya* means essential

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identity and is different from *Tadatmya.*

The philosophy of Lingayathism is so far the same as the *Kashmere Shivadvaita*. But *Kashmere* philosophers have not given any special name to their *Advaitism*; but the Lingayaths call it *Shaktivishishtadvaita* to give prominence to the wonder-working power of Shiva. However *Shakt*i is not as prominent as in *Shaktism,* where Shiva is so negligible without *Shakti* that Shiva becomes a kind of immovable (*Jadavastu*) without the *Shakti*. But according to Lingayath religion *Shakti* is Shiva's obedient hand maid executing the commands of her Lord. She is in a perfectly harmonious relation with Shiva, the ultimate Reality. Hence Shiva is characterized and distinguished by his power or capacity to work, which is only a phase of His *Prakash* in the form of *Vimarsha*. This is *Shaktivishishtadvaita*. The *Kashmere* Philosophers imply the *Shaktivishistatva* of Shiva but do not express it in so many words. While the Lingayaths express it by naming their *Advaita "Shaktivishishtadvaita"*. This is the first point of difference between the two Schools, which is only a difference in terminology and also an improvement in Lingayath philosophy. Hence *Vishishtatva* (Speciality) does not imply any inseparable union of two or more substances like, Brahman, Jiva, *Achit* of the *Ramanuja* system of South Indian *Shaivism*, as maintained by *Shakti. Vishisthatva* simply stresses the nature of chit of *Prakash* that can note the power to work wonders.

There is another reason why the essential identity (Samarasya) of Shiva and *Shakti* is stressed and termed *Shaktivishishtadvaita*. The reason is that Lingayath philosophers like the *Kashmere*ans do not agree with and approve of *Kaivaldvaita* of *Shankaracharya*, the preacher of *Mayavada*, the theory of illusion. Like the *Kashmere* philosophers the Lingayaths hold that the Lord's creation is real and not illusion. They reject *Mayavada* and prove that creation is the result of *Shaiva's* wonder-working power that is capable of doing things which are impossible for any other agency to do. The capability of the Lord is, therefore, said to be *Aghatanghatnatiayasi.* The *Mayavada* of *Shankaracharya* is demolished and *Shaktivishishtadvaita* is established.

There are two great defects in Shankaracharya's *Mayavada*, which admits *Maya* as the *Shakti* of *Brahman*. There is no explanation of the origin and abode of *Maya* The second defect is that the relation of Maya as the *Shakti* of Brahman is not well explained. Hence *Adhara*

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(substratum) of Maya is not clear. The two weak points of *Mayavada* are criticized and the theory stands refuted, *Shaktivishishtadvaita* explains the connection of Maya, the meaning of which is not *Avidhya* but something else as will be noted presently, with the Brahman in the way noted hitherto.

The extracts (given above), containing a succinct refutation of *Mayavada*, will speak for and justify themselves. They briefly state and reject the theory of Maya of Shankara; Maya is there in the system of Lingayath Philosophy as the sixth of 36th principles or *Tatvas*, which is not the 36 principles. But the first six principles, as maintained by the South Indian School of *Shaivism* differ in their sense and functions from those of *Kashmere* School and the Lingayath school of *Shaktivishishtadvaita*. It is also not possible for us to note fully the explanation of the *Tatvas* by the different schools. But it may be said that the South Indian *Shivadvaita* is similar to the *Vishistadvaita* of *Ramanuja*. But the *Kashmere* and Lingayath Schools differ from both *Ramanuja's* and *Shankara's* doctrines.

Shaktivishishtadvaita is *Nirvisheshadvaita,* for simple reasons that there is no *Vishesh* as maintained by *Ramanuja.* At the same time he means to claim *Shaktivishishtadvaita* to be real *Nirvisheshadvaita* rather than that of *Shankaracharya's Kaivaladvaita* which, he means, is not true, being defective and objectionable.

Amayayiyam Eshatvam i.e., the Lordship of the universe not rise to by Maya of *Ajnana* (ignorance) rejects the *Mayavada*, in which Brahman is the Lord of the universe brought into existence by Maya as its material cause. In the school of *Kevaldvaita* Brahman, the Supreme Reality is a mere "surrendered abstraction" sitting apart from the phenomenal universe. The conception of Brahman, the changeless unconditioned reality (*Kutastha)* is tantamount to some inert principle like the *Shankya Purusha." Nirvishesh'* rejects the *Vishistadvaita* of *Ramanuja* (and for that matter that of the *Shrikantha* School) in as much as in this school the *parabrahman* has the *Vishesha* in the form of *Chitt* (Jiva) and *Achitt (jada*). These two *Chitt* and *Achitt* are separate entities quite distinct from the Brahman though in intimate union with it.

There is perfect agreement between the schools of *Kashmere* and the Lingayaths. But the Lingayaths strike a new path different from that of *Kashmere* School. And the difference lies in the explanation of the

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sixth principle; Maya, Maya according to the *Kashmere* School, is *Durghasamaadansmarthah Shaktivisheshaha*. It is Lord's power that accomplishes something that is impossible of accomplishment for any other agency. This seems to be synonymous with the *Aghatanghatnapatiyasi Shakti* of the Lingayath School. But it is not so. Maya in the *Kashmere* School is *Tirodhanashakti* and begins to operate as the sixth principle (*tatva*). While operates it works wonders and accomplishes what is impossible for any other agency. The *tiridhanshakti* becomes a limiting adjunct of the Lord and gives rise to the five *Kanchuka's* (sheaths), of the Universal Experience (Shiva) with His five characteristics limited by the *Shakti*, namely *Nityatva* or eternity, becomes, *Kala* or Time of limited duration; *Vyapaktva* or all pervasiveness becomes *niyati* or space limited; *Purnatva* or all-completeness becomes Raga or attachment to something only; *Vidhta* or all-knowledge becomes (*Ashudha) vidhaya* or limited knowledge' and *Sarvakartatva* or all-authorship becomes *Kinchintkartatva* or *kalaa.* The Lord is entangles with these and becomes a Jiva. The meaning of Maya approaches here the etymological meaning of Maya, which being derived from Ma to measure, is taken to mean that by which something is measured if., the power of voluntary self-limitation. The first manifestation of the impure creation is Maya. It is this *Tatva*, the manifestation of which, first of all, apparently breaks the unity of Universal Self in its creative aspect. It manifests diversity independently of any external helper or promoter. It is conceived both as the power of obascuration and as primary cause of all the limited manifestations. In its former aspect it is often referred to as "Moha" and in the latter as "*paranita*". Its effect also by transference of epithet, (*upachara*) is spoken of as "*maya*". As such, Maya is limited; for whatever is manifested as apparently separate from the Universal Self is essentially so. It is pervasive, because it is the cause of the universe. It is subtle, because it eludes ordinary comprehension. As an aspect of Universal Self it is eternal.

The *Lingayaths*, as religious beings, start with *Linga* and end with *Linga* and therefore they are *Lingayaths* and not merely because they wear *Linga* on their bodies. To a Lingayath, *Linga* is the highest reality capable of being realized through devotional worship and meditation. The conception of *Linga*, as the representation of the though, symbol of the

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formless or the all-formed Almighty, is lofty and edifying, and there is no trace of either superstition or any impure and dirty idea attached to it.

Astavarana

The *Astavarana* are the eight fold shields or protective coverings of the devotee. They protect the *Anga* from the onslaughts of *Maya* on him and guide him safely for final beatitude in the world. They shield him from the evils attaching to the worldly life by putting the *Anga* out of the three taints and five sheaths. They guard and guide him on the way to enduring happiness by means of spiritual discipline and exercises. These eight Avaranas or guards have special significance of their own and are the means of Upasana in this religious life. The eight fold Avaranas are the spiritual one. They are *Guru*, *Linga*, *Jangama*, *Padodaka,* Vibhuti, Rudrakshi and *Mantra*.

Guru

Guru has the precedence over the other 7 Avaranas who is the *Guru* that initiates the *Anga* and guards him in the religious practices and spiritual culture. It is the *Guru* that performs the Deeksha ceremony of the devotee, who receives another or second birth as it were, the spiritual birth, in contradiction to the physical birth in the world. It is the *Guru* who gives the devotee real insight into the principles of the religion and explains the inner meaning of the practices and guides him on the path of *Mukti*. He gives the *Anga* the necessary instruction and training to enable him to get through the arduous courses of spiritual discipline. The *Guru* is the spiritual mother. He by his gracious look of the eyes, expressive of tenderness, wins the *Anga* and consoles, just like the kind gracious look of the mother which calms down in distress and comforts us. He has gained first-hand knowledge of the world by experience. His affection, tenderness, and saintly life, his vast knowledge of men and things charms the pupil, who therefore, finds great delight in serving him, imitating him, and acquiring knowledge from him. The *Guru* lives in the midst of a town or a village but leads a simple, hard, and exemplary religious life. His association is inspiring to the *Anga* or devotee, who follows the instructions of the *Guru* in toto. The devotee proceeds with the study of the principles and philosophy of the religion with the help of *Guru* and takes guidance from him wherever necessary. This is the reason why *Guru* stands first in the list of *Astavaranas*. The *Guru* at the same time, is worshipped in his meditative

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attitude, in a particular yogic posture with the control of breath by *Pranayam*, with the eyes fixed on the *Linga* in contemplation, the *Guru* is one who is a *Jivanmukta* and is an example of *Linga* worship and spiritual discipline. He is *Guru* because he not only gives precepts and oral instruction but also he is a model in *Linga*-worship and moral and religious life for others to follow. Hence the significance of *Guru* is twofold, as a preceptor and as a living example of the religious course strictly followed. The *Guru* is therefore, actually worshipped at least occasionally in every household if not everyday. He is the *Shiva* Himself being a *Jivanmukta*. When he is worshipped he is called *Jangama*, an inherent *Shiva*. The *Guru* is, thus, the first guard or shield of the soul against the assaults of *Maya*.

Linga

The *Istalinga* worn on the body by the *Lingayaths*. The *Istalinga* is *Linga* the gross or physical, the third of the first three modifications of *Ghanalinga*. (The three forms of Linga are *Bhavalinga, Pranalinga* and *Istalinga*) The *Istalinga* gives the worshipper that entire he desires to be worshipped and is, there fore, worshipped every day in devotion.

The *Linga* is given to the body at the time of birth, as is the custom. The *Linga* is always on the body of a person till his death. The person should never lose his *Linga*, because to lose it is to lose his life. The daily worship of the *Linga*, before the *Deeksha* ceremony of a person is performed, may be informal but necessary for the person, so that he may be imbibed with deep reverence for the God and impressed with the significance of spiritual discipline. Though informal, it has its own significance. It makes the wearer and worshipper conscious of his duty to God on account of his uncertain position in worldly life. It makes him aware of the necessity of religious life and spiritual discipline in the way of *Mukti*. The real worship of *Linga* as the religious exercise begins after the *Deeksha* ceremony performed by the *Guru*, who initiates a person into the secrets of religion.

The worship of *Istalinga* is not the worship of an image. The image is merely a substitute of a deity. But the *Istalinga* is not an image of the Lord but the Lord Himself. The devotee is also a modification of Lord and is called *Anga*. Thus the *Anga* and the *Linga* being modifications of the Almighty Lord (*Ghanalinga*) in His *Upasyoopasakaleela*, the worshipper and worshipped are face to face with each other in the worship. The idea

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underlying the *Upasanas* that the *Upasaka* is in no way different from the *Upasya*, the *Linga*. This is *Ahamgrahopasana*, in which the devotee starts with the idea that he is a part and parcel of Lord. Hence, the truth expressed by *"Ahambrhamasmi"*is put into practical form. This is *sahamarga* or the path of fellowship or friendship of the worshipper with the lord. Here the worshipper is taught that he is Swaroop of the Lord; and pure subjective worship of Lord is inculcated in him. The *Anga* looks on the *Linga* as his associate, a friend and a protector, not living apart from him, as in the case of image worship, but living with and in him and making him a part and parcel of himself, the all-powerful Lord. *Anga* is the microcosm of the lord, the macrocosmic *Linga*. The *Anga* has become *Anga* by being cooped up with the body by the working of *Jaadimaya*, the *Shakti* of the Lord. And to be free from the narrow limitations of the body he has to worship the *Linga*, the superior modification in relation with himself but identical with *Ghanalinga*, the macrocosmic soul. He has to worship with the conviction that he will attain his natural or original conditions of Lordship by pure subjective worship of Lord. This is *Ahamgrahopasa*. The *Anga* is taught that his real station is the Lord, in whom he lives, moves and has his being.

The *Istalinga*, as the *Upasyadevata*, is the object of contemplation. The *Anga*, the worshipper and associate of the Lord, fixes his attention on the lord, with a view to becoming one (*samaras*) with Him ultimately. The *Chitaikagrata* or the thought of the Lord by the subjective worship and subjective *Eshwarapranidhan* with the idea of *"Aham Bahamas"* is the highest spiritual ideal that deserves to be carefully and assiduously cultivated. Instead of fixing one's attention on something only with a view to concentrate the mind without allowing it to go back, so that it may be brought under full control, it is very much better that the mind fixed on the Lord in meditation as the ultimate resort and the object of attainment.'

In the preparatory stage *Linga* or *Parashiv* is *Swaroop* of the devotee. He is, therefore, his intimate friend and associate. But later the devotee gradually moves towards the higher ideal of *Samarasya* in the advanced stage. In the preparatory stage the *Bhakt* is in the *Savikalp Samadhi*; and in the advanced or perfected stage he is in the *Nirvikalp Samadhi.*

Linga, the *Upasya,* is the only representation of the *Bhakt* in his meditative posture. Thus the *Anga* is reflected in the *Linga*. This makes

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the idea of *Aahmgrahopasana* actual. The *Linga* and *Anga* are, therefore, the adverse and reverse of the same thing. The *Anga* realizes that *Linga* is macrocosmic because it is free from all limitations; while itself is microcosmic being confined to the body. He has to expand himself by tearing off the limitations. To attain the ideal and objective, he has to seek the Highest in himself by developing the power in himself. That power is *Bhakti*, the modification of Lord's *Shakti*, that *Bhakti*, without the sincere devotion and attachment to the Lord, nothing is possible. That is the root cause of self expansion.

The real *Linga* in its various forms is in the body. The six centres of nerve power, called the *Adharas* of *Shakti* by the *Shaktas* and the followers of *Raja yoga*, are the six places that the *Lingas* occupy. The worship of those *Lingas* to develop the human power into a vast all-reaching spiritual power is the real worship. This is internal worship and the superior or the only form of worship. But this is very difficult in the beginning before inculcating a theistic and spiritual attitude and cultivating the habit of devotion to the God with the conviction that is in him. For most men are of the emotional temperament and can be easily attracted to the path of *Bhakti*. Men of severe intellectual temperament living on the hollow pabulum of abstractions are always rare. An intellectual attitude has to be prepared for gigantically by emotion. And devotion to the God in some concrete form is necessary. *Istalinga* does this; and herein lies the real significance of *Istalinga* as the gross form or modification of *Ghanalinga*.

Hence the propriety of that is necessary for gradual psychic culture. The worship of *bahya* (outer) *Linga*, leads to the worship of *Atmalinga* in due course. The *Istalinga*, taken to be the gross form of *Ghanalinga* is to be filled with Shivakala or spirit of *Ghanalinga*; and the *Anga*, a part and parcel of the Godhead, is also to be inspired with the sincere spirit of devotion at the same time. The *Anga* is to be taught that the highest is in him and in the *Istalinga*. So the *Bhakta* starts with the worship of *Istalinga* that he is *Shiva* and *Shiva* is Jeeva. This is *Ahamgrahopasana* pure and simple.

Jangama

Jangama is an itinerant *Jivanamukta* moving about in the country for the guidance of devotees in their spiritual exercise and culture. He is, therefore, considered equal to the godhead, the *Linga* and also *Guru*.

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The goal of soul is the liberation from the three limitations and mainly from *Anavamala* (the three malas (taints) Anavamala = inferior taint (feeling having bound with god, self limitation, Mayamala = illusory taint and Karmikamala = Physical taint) because liberation from that *Mala* makes the soul essentially one (Samaras) with Parashiva. The first frauts of *Anavamala* are the feelings I-ness and my-ness. A person, that has became free from *Anavamala,* has neitherI-ness nor my-ness, and does not refer to himself as an individual. He has no thought of his body, his family, his property, and other things that are ordinarily supposed to belong to him. The direct effect of freedom is the free flow of energies to know, to desire and to do. This librated soul, therefore, possesses unlimited knowledge. It can transcend time

The products of *Maya* only serve as means for the soul's activeness of knowing, desiring and doing. But as the liberated souls have nothing in this world to know, to desire and to do. These products of *Maya* are no more of any use to them. The liberated souls will give them up as soon as they attain liberation, i.e. they will leave the physical body. They require no place to live in or things to enjoy, as they get completely out of the domain of *Maya*. They move about and reveal the ultimate truths of religion to those that need them. They give valuable guidance in the course of spiritual discipline and religious exercises by their own example. Because they move about self-lessly, they are called *Jangamas*. The liberated men, the *Jangamas*, posses the necessary knowledge and are able to assist others in their endeavours to attain liberation. God, in his infinite mercy, so arranges the evolution that some become *Jivanmukta Jangama*. But these souls are in no way affected by their own mind and body. Having seen the true nature of *Maya*, they cannot be influenced by such insignificant products of *Maya*.

As the liberated souls require no further knowledge, they need not perform any fresh action, and are therefore free from the need of indulging in any activity for their own sake. As regards the fruit of past actions, they must all have been experienced except perhaps those that determine the nature of the body. If the body perishes at liberation it means that all the fruits of past actions have been experienced. If it does not, it follows that there are some acts left whose fruits it has yet to experience. Hence there are two classes of liberated souls, 1) those that

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leave the body at liberation, and 2) those that continue with the body even after liberation. The latter are *Jivanmukta Jangamas*.

When the soul is liberated from *Anavamala,* it can have a full flow of energy from *Maya* and acquire omniscience. But, if it is deprived of or liberated from *Maya* also, it cannot know or do any thing. It is quiescent. Then the love of God comes to it directly and fills it with divine illumination and makes it one with God. The *Jivanmukta Jangamas* on the contrary merge in the infinite love of God and shower that love on the unlibareated souls. Some *Jivanmuktas* remain in their original position as kings, statesmen, or householders, and make themselves useful to others by their acts and lives. Some become religious preachers and tour round the country attracting disciples and followers. But in the midst of these activities, they remain unaffected, all the acts being automatic and unattached.

They are man and God in one and are useful to men in both capacities. As they have been men like ourselves, we can understand them, have direct communication with them, and get from them an idea of true love, true knowledge, and true action. Their very presence uplifts and gives joy to people. They are each, in his measure, the embodiments of God, and thus demonstrate the existence of God. They are also the best objects of our worship. They are saints (*Shivasharanas*) and men of endless spiritual power. They make an indelible impression on the minds and drive out petty objects of the world that catch the fancy of the people. If we worship them, it will be the first form of worshipping God. This is why the *Jangama* is the third shield and is to be worshipped as reverentially as *Linga* and *Guru*. In fact no difference is made between the first three *Avarana* s, the *Guru*, *Linga*, and *Jangama*.

Jangama, a Sanskrit word, etymologically means that which moves. When this word applied to a person, in the context of *Lingayath* religion, it symbolizes a man who moves from place to place preaching moral and religious values. The two main categories of *Jangama* are 1) *Sthira* and 2) *Chara. Sthira Jangama* is a person who, staying in *math* i.e., a *Lingayath* monastery, has to carry on mass education, preaching to the local people, and giving them the necessary guidance to achieve spiritual progress, and to perform certain rites and rituals concerned with birth, marriage, death, holy communication on special occasions etc. Chara *Jangama* is one who constantly moves around, preaching as

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he goes, without settling himself at any particular place and without accumulating any property of his own.

Vibhuti or Ashes

Is the fourth Avarana and smearing it on the body is the fourth religious exercise. All ritualistic exercises serve the twofold purpose of increasing the love for God and adherence to the religious life. Every religion has a set of religious exercises for its followers. Wearing of the cross by Roman Catholics is a special exercise intended for reminding them of the great solicitude that Jesus had for the salvation of the world. The cross induces them to accept, and to co-operate with for their personal salvation. Similarly, the sacred ashes of the Shaivas and the *Veerashaivas* remind them of the love of God, which reduces the impurities in them to ashes they make us feel that the Lords love is with us and creates in us a desire to lead a spiritual life. This underlying idea of Vibhuti and its contemplation and wearing are very important ritualistic exercises.

Rudrakshi

Is the fifth *Avarana*, The origin. Of *Rudrakshi* is described in a Puranic story that *Shiva* looked up in a meditative and concentrated attitude at the three castles of Tripura. The tears, that fell from his eyes in the act of looking up steadily, became solid and came to be called *Rudrakshi's* (on account of their falling from the eyes of *Rudra*). The *Rudrakshi* is a reminder of *Shiva*'s fixed gaze, the Yogic steadfast gaze. The devotee has to bear this in mind and try to cultivate *yogic* steadfastness like *Shiva*, the great matchless *Yogin*. They urge a devotee on to attain perfection in his *Yogic* meditation.

Padodaka

The holy water, with which the *Linga*, the feet of the *Guru*, and the *Jangama* are washed, is the sixth Avarana. Water is the most important of the five elements from the point of view of cleanliness. The *Padodaka* is the symbol of the washing of three (the three taints Anavamala = inferior taint (feeling having bound with god, self limitation, Mayamala = illusory taint and Karmikamala = Physical taint) taints attached to the soul. *Guru* and the *Jangama* being *Jivanmuktas* are free from all taints. And their Padodaka is the embodiment of the taints. The devotee has to be free from the taints attached to his soul and takes a lesson from the Padodaka that he has also to strive to be free from the three taints,

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when he takes the Padodaka of his *Guru* or *Jangama*. The *Padodaka* is thus intended to produce a psychological effect on the devotee that he should wash his soul clean of the three taints, as he has to wash his body clean of all physical dirt. The exercise for making the devotee aware of the three taints and the necessary of washing them away from the soul gradually by cultivating merely ordinary water called teertha. It is the symbol of the water of knowledge (*Jnanajal*) that washes away the taints that stick to and constrict to the soul.

Prasada

Prasada, generally, means favor of grace of a superior being. In religion *Prasad* means favor or grace of God shown to the devotee. *Prasad* in Lingayathism signifies more than this. *Prasada* is the grace of god no doubt. But the real *Prasada* leads to the peace of mind by grace of God. Mind and its impure workings become the root-cause of all troubles ad worries of life by producing *Karmsanskar*, which causes the cycles of birth and re-birth. And if the mind is kept clean and pure and absorbed in the thought of God, the *Karmasamskar* is destroyed and all troubles and worries of life vanish. Hence the real *Prasad* is the stable cleanliness and calmness of mind; the purity and equanimity of mind, which as the soul's agent and organ, brings about the purity and freedom of the soul. Such is the real sense and significance of *Prasada*

To obtain favour of the Lord, the devotee has to keep constantly in mind that all that he does, eats, sees, hears, and enjoys is owing to the Lord. He expresses his gratitude to the Lord that whatever he enjoys and whatever he does is his *Prasada*. He should address all that he takes or does to God before taking or doing the same himself. This is *Karma* Yoga of the best type, when the mind is trained like this, and gradually develops the sense of purity and calmness. The soul gradually becomes free from Karmasamskar and ultimately attains freedom from further transmigrations, i.e., it attains final beatitude.

The practical example of *Prasada* is that of the *Guru* and *Jangama*, who gives *Prasada*. The *Bhakta* receives. He then learns from them the secret of *Prasad* and the way of addressing to God all that he takes and does. Thus, the *Prasada* of *Guru*, *Linga*, and *Jangama* is an exercise of utmost importance in spiritual development.

Mantra

A Mantra consists of certain letters arranged in a definite sequence of sound of which the letters are the representative sequence of sound of

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which the letters are the representative signs. To produce the designed effect, the Mantra must be intended in the proper way according to both sound (*Vani*) and rhythm (*Svar*); for these reasons a Mantra ceases to be such when translated and becomes a mere sentence. By Mantra the sought for *Devata* appears and by success (*Sidda)* therein vision is of the three worlds. As the Mantra is in fact *Devata*, by practice of this is known and no amount of theoretical knowledge will do. Not merely do the rhythmical vibrations of the sheaths of the worshipper but there form the image of the *Devata* appears.

Mantrasidda is the ability to make a Mantra efficacious and to gather its fruit, in which case the *Sadhak* is *Mantrasidda.* "Whatever the *Sadhak* desires that he surely obtains" .whilst therefore prayer may end in merely physical sound, Mantra is ever. When rightly said, a potent compelling force, a word of power effective to produce both material gain and accomplish worldly desires, as also to promote the four aims of sentient beings (*chaturvarga*), Advaitic knowledge, and knowledge, and liberation. And thus it is said that *Siddha* or success is the certain result of *Japa* or recitation of Mantra.

The mantra of the Lingayaths is "*Namha Shivaya*" and is called *Panchaxari* on account of its having five syllables. With Om ( ) prefixed, it becomes *Shadaxarimantra*. The mantra is expressive of Shiva and on that account is identical with Shiva, just as a predicate is identical with the subject.

Parashiva, the *Parabrahma*n, is the source of all *Tattvas.* The two letters "Shiva", including and express all the *Tattavs.* Moreover Shiva is *Vedavedantasar* that is, the Highest Spiritual principle and the pith that the Vedas and *Vedangas.* The Highest Principle and the devotee's devotion to it are needed. The Mantra containing the devotee (*Istadevata*) also expresses the identity of the Jiva or *Anga* (the devotee); this identity is the ultimate goal of the *Anga.*

Thus *Namha* expresses *Anga,* that humbly surrenders itself by his salutation to Shiva, the *Devata* (*Istadevata*), and *Aya* expresses the *Samarassya* or essential identity of Shiva and leads Jiva to the ultimate end. The *Mantrajaya,* therefore, leads to the development *of Jiva's* Power within him and to the gradual expansion of his soul, which in the end restores the *Anga* to its expresses the Pentads that constitute the *Samsar.*

The practice of the Mantra leads to salvation of Moksha. With *Om* prefixed to it the mantra becomes *Shadakshar* mantra (of six syllables).

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Om is *Pranava* and expresses *Parashiva. Om* is made up of a, u, m' and the three express the trinity of powers (*Iccha, Jnana, Kriya*), which are in turn identical with *Satt, Chitt* and *Anand*, The three positive qualities of *Parabrahman* according to Vedanta. The three powers are the three creative energies. The energy (*Nada*) in *Sadakhatatv*a springs from Shiva-*Shakti-Tattava* and solidifies itself (*Ghnibhavati*) as the creative power of the Lord (*Bindu* or *IshavarTattva*) manifesting in the trinity of creative energies. *Om* then stands for the most general aspect of what which is the source of all, namely *Parashiva.*

The *Panchakshari Mantra* (*Namha Shivaya*) is but an extended form of *Om*, i.e. *Om* elaborates or explicates itself in the form of "*Namha Shivaya.*"

Thus *Om* and *Namha Shivaya* are one and the same and express *Parashiva.* The six syllables of the mantra (*namha Shivaya Om*) are identical with the six *Lingas* and six Chakras. Thus Na is *Acharalinga* in the *Swadhishtanachakra*, Shi is *Shivalinga* in the *Manipurchakra*; *Va* is *Charalinga* in the *Anahatachakra; Ya* is *Prasadalinga* in the *Vishuddichakra*; and lastly *Om* is *Mahalinga* in the *Ajnachakra.*

The *Bijamantra* rouses the *Shaktis* in the form of the Six *Kala* s of the *Shakti.* The Kalas thus roused ultimately develop into primeval Power of *Parashiva* and 'at-one-ment' or *Samarasya* is the result. Hence the practice of Mantra is laid down for the attainment of Moksha. The practice of Mantra is said to be superior to the practices laid down by *Varnashramadharma.*

The *Mantrayoga* of the Lingayathism, which rejecting other mantra of the *Shakta* religion, lays great stress by the only Mantra, by the practice of which the highest end of the human beings, the Moksha, is attained. By the practice of different *Shakta* Mantras a variety kind of success (*Siddhi*) is attained. But such *Siddi* feeds the human vanity and is very likely to deflect the practitioner from the straight forward course and the main objective of Moksha. The variety of Success is very likely to lead the human beings to the abuse of the power attained. Hence, to avoid that likelihood, the Lingayaths have retained the only one mantra which enables the devotee to achieve the expansion of the self into ultimate 'at-one-ment' with *Parashiva* of Linga, called *Lingangasamarasya.*

Panchachara

The direction of the human beings in society is largely by imitation and suggestion which are psychological in their operation. An extended

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from of imitation and suggestion is the adoption of local, social or religious customs. The *Panchachara* are intended to convey to the members of the community the principles of religion and religious conduct by these two psychological operations. These *Panchachara* or five codes of conduct lay down for the individual member's rules of behavior as social beings. They are *Shivachara, Lingachara, Sadachara, Bhrutyachara* and *Ganachara.* The first two *Shivachara* and *Lingachara* are purely personal and but reject on other individuals of the community in their intercourse everyday *(*Sakhare, M. R, 2004:515-518*)*.

Shivachara

Shivachara requires a *Lingayath* to believe that *Shiva* is the *Parabrahman*. The devotee (*Anga*) has to maintain all through his life the faith and belief that *Shiva* is the only God and only object of *Upasana*. Whatever devotional acts he performs, prayers he offers, and thoughts he thinks they must be all about *Shiva* and none else. This is *Shivachara*.

Lingachara

Lingachara is the worship of *Shiva* through *Linga*, the amorphous representation or symbol of *Shiva*. The worship of *Linga* is the worship of *Shiva.* The worship of *Linga* (*Istalinga*), the gross or physical, is the beginning of daily religious observances, prayers and contemplation, growing into the worship of the higher modifications of *Shiva*, namely, *Pranalinga* and *Bhavalinga*. *Linga*, the *Istalinga*, is the Godhead of the *Anga*, the devotee, who should remain faithful to *Linga* and serve him faithfully, thought his life, this is *Lingachara*.

Sadachara

Sadachara requires a *Lingayath* to follow a profession and live strictly a moral and virtuous life. He should earn money by working in his profession for his livelihood and for supporting his family. He should utilize his savings and surplus for others in their needs. He should furnish his *Guru* with funds for the propagation of religion and service of the public. He should feed *Jangamas*; the *Jivanmuktas* moving about over the country in the service of religion and to help individual devotees by guiding them in their religious practices, By *Sadachara* the members are required to make no difference between one *Lingayath* and another but should take all to be as respectable and good as *Shiva.*

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He should interdine and intermarry freely; with *Lingayaths*. Character, right moral and religious conduct, should be the only criterion and consideration in the intercourse with other members of the community; and nothing else like a high or low profession should, influence affairs of social life. This is *Sadachara*.

Bhruthyachara

Bhrutyachara is the devotee's attitude of complete humility towards *Shiva* and His forms of *Linga*. So also, he has to maintain the attitude of humility towards his *Guru*, who gives him all guidance in spiritual discipline and religious practices. Similarly the *Jangama*'s, the *Jivanmukta* s, and Shivasharanas should be treated with all respect and all humility. A *Lingayath* has to adopt the attitude of service and modesty towards all *Lingayaths* as children and followers of the same God. *Shiva* or *Linga* and the same religion. In short, the attitude in general of a *Lingayath* in social behavior and intercourse should be one of humility, modesty and respect for others; so also he should be kind to all animals and treat them kindly. This is Bhruthyachara. The conduct of a *Lingayath* is as a servant of the society and friend of all animals.

Ganachara

Ganachara is *Lingayath*'s behavior, towards the community as a whole. He should not tolerate scandal of the Godhead and ill-treatment of men and animals by others. As a member of community, he has to strive for its upliftment and development.

The short description of Panchacharas will make it clear how they are intended to cultivate the attitude of devotion and godliness, Universal brotherhood and cooperation between members of the community, and honest life and kindness towards animal world.

Shatasthala

The word *Shatasthala* is derived from "*Shat* means six and '*sthala* which means stage. The latter in the philosophical context means God. What is currently being practiced by ardent *Lingayaths* was expounded, propounded and systematized some 800 years ago by the *Lingayathism* saints. The practice of path enables one to achieve one's final goal of eternal union of the *Anga* (body) with the *Linga* (God). The *Shatasthala* is not just a lofty religious principle but a path, which permits one to accomplish life's ultimate goal. There is a close relationship between

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Shiva, the human being and the world. A *Bhakta* becomes *Shiva* by breaking the bondage created by ignorance, as accrued by unrighteous deeds and desires. The *Shatsthala* occupies premier position in the religion. The 12th century *Sharanas* practiced it perfectly. It is considered to be the brain child of Channabasava, who was entrusted by Basava with the responsibility and the task of expanding, expounding and explaining the *Shatsthala* path to the laity. It should be noted here that *Kamiagama*, the first of the *Shivagamas*, mentions the terms *Veerashaiva* and *Istalinga*. Both the *Kiranagama* and the *Yogajagama* state that a person without the *Istalinga* becomes unfit to receive the *Prasada* (consecrated food offering to God). The *Vatalagama*, the *Veeragama* and the *Parameshwaragama* provide detailed descriptions of the *Shatsthala* path. It begins by explaining that, an aspirant must have *Shivabhakti* in his/ her heart (Munavalli S. 2002: Pp111-113).

Bhaktasthala

Bhaktasthala involves the worship of *Guru*, *Linga* and *Jangama*. When one understands the true meaning of this *Sthala*, one conceives the true meaning of the trinity of *Guru*, *Linga* and *Jangama*. Through this *Sthala* one becomes free from the desires of the body and mind and becomes a *Bhakta* by virtue of his/her belief in *Shiva*.

Maheshasthala

Maheshasthala involves the actual practice of the above concept, which enables to lose the desire for material wealth, not coveting and not longing for unrighteous sensual pleasures. The belief in *Shiva* becomes an unflinching faith through the observance of *Maheshasthala*.

Prasaadisthala

Prasaadisthala states that all things in this world are gifts of *Shiva* and whatever human receives as God's gifts must be returned to him through the intermediacy of the *Jangama*, who represents *Shiva*. Since the seeker offers back the gifts from *Shiva*, this is considered to be the *Prasaadisthala.*

Pranalingisthala

Pranalingisthala makes one aware of the inner being. Here the seeker comes to believe that the *Linga* is the *Jangama* and all actions are transformed into prayers. When one steadfastly practices this *Sthala*,

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one forgets one's body and mind begins to see and feel the presence of the inner voice, while reaching a state of self-enlightenment through personal experience.

Sharanasthala

Sharanasthala endows an individual with the feeling and knowledge of God's presence in his/her own soul and begins a direct dialogue with *Shiva*. This sublime feeling enables the seeker to see *Shiva* within himself/herself and in every other human being. The soul becomes filled with *Shiva-Jnan*, *Shiva-Bhakti* and *Shiva*-worship. Every thing becomes *Shivamaya* (filled with *Shiva*'s presence, and not *Maya* of illusion). At this stage one does not falter; one is self-sustained and self-aware of *Shiva*'s Grace.

Aikyasthala

Aikyasthala forms the final stage, which permits a *Lingayath* to fulfill her/his life's destiny. It is the culmination of the sublime achievement. One is at peace from within and without. His/her soul is filled with heavenly bliss. There are no desires and no wants. There is just the Supreme *Shiva* beckoning the soul to come and embrace Him.

Worship of Linga

Shivalinga, the amorphous representation of *Shiva*, is the image of *Shiva* based on the inner meaning. The *Linga* worn on the body, technically called *Istalinga*, is the miniature of *Stavaralinga* worshipped in temples. It is made of light gray slate stone obtained from *Parvatgiri* in the North arcot. To be kept intact all through the wearer's life, it is coated all over with fine durable thick black paste of cow dung ash mixed with some suitable oil. Sometimes it is made of ashes mixed with clarified butter. The coating is called *"Kanti"* or covering. The question arises whether the *Istalinga* is as much an image as a *Stavarlinga* and its worship is as much image worship as that of a *Stavaralinga*. The suspicion of the worship of *Istalinga* being image worship is likely to be supported by the worship by *Lingayaths* of image at home of particular family deities, which vary according to local customs and prevalence of local deities, male or female, more generally male deities. The answer to the question, weather *Istalinga* is an image and its worship is image worship, is an emphatic no. *Istalinga* is not image or *Prateeka* of *Shiva* and worship is not *Prtikopasana*. It is *Shiva* himself and its worship

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Aahamgrahopasana. Daharopasana is not the *Manasopasana* of the Prateek of *Parabrhman* but is the *Upasna* of the *Hradayantarvartilinga*, the *Jyotirlinga* or Pranalinga worn or borne in the heart, i.e., residing tin the heart. The *Upasana* of the devotee is the *Aahamgrhopasana* of *Parashiva*. The *Istalinga* or the *Linga* in its gross form is *Parashiva* himself; and the *Upaasak*, who is the microcosm of the macrocosmic soul, is brought face to face with *Parashiva,* the *Upassyadevata*, by *Aahamgrahopasana.* In the *Pratikopaasana*, on the other hand, the *Upassyadevata* is not face to face with the *Upasak* or the devotee. It is merely the representative or image of the devata that is worshiped. In the scheme of *Shatsthala* philosophy of *Lingayat* religion, the *Linga* (*SugunaShiva)* and *Anga* (the devotee of a human being) are only the twofold manifestations of *Parashiva*, the *NirgunShiv*, in his sportive activity called *Upaassyopasakaleela*.

This *Linga* is the upassya form and *anga* is the *upasak* form of *parashiva*. Similarly *parashakti*; becomes to fold, *kala* associated with *Linga* and *Bhakti* associated with *anga* or the individual soul. In this way *Anga* with *Bhakti* is the smallest possible model or the very abridged form of *Shiva* and his *Shakti*. The *Upasana* is, therefore, *Ahamgrahopasana*, because the *Linga* and *Anga* are not one and the same. *Linga* is three fold 1) *Bhavalinga* or *Linga* the ideal corresponding to (*Karanasharir)* of the devotee 2) *Pranlinga* or *Linga* the vital or mental corresponding to (*Sukshma sharer*) of the devotee 3) *Istalinga* or the gross or physical corresponding to (*stulsharir)* of the devotee. *Istalinga* is connected with the *Pranalinga* and the *Bhavalinga*. The devotee starts with the upasana of *Istalinga* and reaches by stages the *Pranalinga* and the *Bhavalinga* with the idea of him being a part and parcel of *Parashiva*. *Istalinga*, therefore, not being an image but is *Shiva* Himself.

Such a kind of upasana or mode of worship is called *Sahmarga* based on the *Yogavidya* of the *Divvyagamas* or the Divine Shaiva scripture. This corresponds to the remaining three modes of worship based on the remaining three Padas of the *Agamas*, the a*chryapada,* the *Kriyapada,* and the *Jnanapad*a. They are respectively called the *Dasmarga,* the *Satputramarga*, and the *sanmarga.*

The *Dasamarg*, or the path of servant following the master, is the disciple of the charyapada. It consists in the search of Lord in the

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objective *Prapanch* and has for its object the disposition of the ancillaries connected with this worship under the form of a material Prateek, the singing of his glorious ever and anon and the extensions of *Aathitya* (honor and hospitality) to his genuine servants. The satputramarga of the path of son serving the will of his father takes a higher step of worshipping the Lord under a mental prateek formed in mind in accordance with the description in the *Kriya*pada of the Divine *Agamas*. In this stage the rites significatory of the purification of *Sthulasharir* (Physical body) of the worshipper and the symbolical and mental imaging of *the Sukshma Sharir* of the same are added on to the externals connected with worship of the Lord under a material Prateek. The worshipper behaves towards the Lord as a son does towards his father with a combination of reverence and affection. The Sahamarg that is contemplated by *Lingayathism* is pure subjective worship of the Lord. Here the Jiva is slowly disentangled from the lusts of flesh and its bondage to corruption and joined on to the Lord. The Jiva is taught to discern for itself, that its inveterate identification of its own self with the vrittis of *Chitta* and *Indriyas* is due to an inherited *Vasana*, and that its own station is in the Lord, in whom it lives, moves and has its being. For achieving this end, the whole of the *Yogapadas* of the *Agamas* is devoted and their practical bearing on the daily conduct of the search after God, is fully brought. Here the worshipper behaves towards Lord as an associate or a friend. Lastly the *Sanmarg*, the highest mode of worship, is the final step or stage of the *Veerashaiva* devotee, in which the subjective worship of the lord is further inculcated in letter and in spirit for attaining to the condition of *Sayujya or Samrassya*, in which condition the sense of triputi ceases to operate, the subject and object become indistinguishable, and the Lord alone is seen in place of His *prapancha* that we all see. This is the *Jnanmarga* where the devotee becomes possessed of Sahajsamadhi. The *charya* and *Kriya* disciplines are temporary or *vavharik* and *Yoga* and *Jnaan* disciplines are real and *Parmarthik*. The *sahamarg* is a stage preparatory to the *sanmarga*, in which the objective conduct of the worshipper in *sahmarg* is eliminated. In the *Sahamarg* the worshipper starts with the idea of being similar (*swarup*) to the lord and attains saruppya which by the sanmarga expands into Saujjya or Lingangasamarassya, as it is called technically in *Lingayathism*. Hence the *Istalinga* is not the prateek of Lord but the Lord

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himself and its worship is not that of prateek or image worship.

So far as the image-worship at home of *Lingayatas* is concerned, it has no scriptural sanction behind it. It is merely an imitation of the image worship of the other Hindus which is universal in India. It is certainly an imitation by the *Lingayaths*(Sakhare, M. R, 2004: 329-333).

The *Lingayaths*, as religious beings, start with *Linga* and end with *Linga* and therefore they are *Lingayaths* and not merely because they wear *Linga* on their bodies. To a *Lingayathism*, *Linga* is the highest reality capable of being realized through devotional worship and meditation. The conception of *Linga*, as the representation of the thought, symbol of the formless or the all-formed Almighty, is lofty and edifying, and there is no trace of either superstition or any impure and dirty idea attached to it.

Kayaka and Dashooha

Another very important feature of Basaveshwara philosophy is that he sought to bring about socio-economic equality in the society through his famous twin principles of *Kayaka* and *Dashooha. Kayaka* is regarded as an important means for the removal of all inequalitieseconomic, social, religious and spiritual. Basaveshvara gave a concrete meaning to the conception of work or occupation in the form of *Kayaka*. He gave it a spiritual significance, high honor, great importance, dignity and divinity, whether it was a high or low work(Patil. J. S. 2005).

Kayaka is a spiritual view of labor and not merely a materialistic view. According to *Kayaka* man has to sublimate work into spiritual motive. Sharana says "work itself is heaven". "Kayakave Kailasha". Every labour is looked upon by Sharana with high honor, dignity and spiritual significance. *Kayaka* doesn't encourage amssing wealth or hoarding of money. It is motivated by profit. *Kayaka* is to be done in the spirit of Dashooha. The earning from *Kayaka* is to be dedicated to the preacher or *Jangama* who in turn utilizes it for the good of the society. *Kayaka* is a duty by which each one has to maintain oneself, and render its proceeds to the welfare of all. This is the comprehensive view of *Kayaka* (Javali.V.K, 2004:139-144).

The democratic principle of freedom of occupation is embodied in *Kayaka*. The *Karma* theory which has given rise to Caste system in society is opposed to this principle. It dictates that each man's occupation is pre-determined by birth. It says that man has no freedom

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to choose any vocation he likes and no freedom to think and act as he likes. The protagonist of the *Karma* theory advocate that one has to follow the hereditary profession; that a farmer's son should become a farmer, a barber's son a barber, a preacher's son a preacher and so on. Basaveshwara revolted against this. He advocated freedom of occupation and dignity of labor. This is crystallized in *Kayaka*. Basavshwara says emphatically that he does not want to ask what *Kayaka* one is following. He condemns vehemently any discrimination on the basis of birth, sex or occupation. He considers *Karma* as an "impurity" (or *Mala)*. The history of India reveals that the *Karma* theory has hampered the progress of society and has caused economic stagnation. The *Kayaka* theory on the other hand supports the progressive view of the society and the development of national economy. Begging and idleness have no place in the *Kayaka* system of society. *Kayaka* and Dashooha emphasize self-denial and charity. *Kayaka*, according to Basaveshwara means, every one should be engaged in his work and it should be beneficial to society. He stressed that one should be honest and sincere towards one's work. Hence, according to Basaveshwara's principle of *Kayaka* all occupations are equal, have equal dignity and are equally beneficial to the society Basaveshwara was a practical philosopher. He made a signal contribution to practical philosophy through his concept of *Kayaka* interestingly enough; This concept is almost totally in conformity with the modern democratic principles and socialism. Its goal is an equitable distribution of wealth and work. In the *Kayaka* system of society every body works according to his capacity.

Thus, a person's position or status in society should be determined on the basis of his acts and character and not on the basis of his possession. A dustman has a different job from a schoolmaster and is likely to have a different circle of friends; but he ought not to be considered to be an inferior sort of man.

Basaveshwara's principle of *Kayaka* was quite opposed to the theory of *Karma*, which indicates that each man's vocation is pre-determined by birth. *Kayaka* concept opposes the kind of water-tight compartment of laborers which creates a system of hierarchy; it pleads for the free choice of occupation and thereby puts a death blow to the unequal division of laborers by the *Karma* theory.

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As per the principle of *Dashooha,* since every one earns his minimum requirement through *Kayaka* he contributes the rest of his labour to the society rather than accumulating personal wealth. Therefore, *Kayaka* does not encourage the amassing of wealth; it is to be done in the spirit of *Dashooha,* which will bring to an end all kinds of exploitations and disparities of wealth. Thus, Basaveshvara enunciated not merely political equality; but also social, political, economic, religious and spiritual. The inequality, which he lamented, was not the inequality of personal endowments, but of the social, economic, religious and spiritual practices which created inequality and came in the way of development of individual personality. He went to the very roots of the state of nature in attacking the inequality created by human beings. As human beings are equal by nature in their wisdom and virtues, that should be maintained accordingly.

Anubhava Mantapa

Unlike any other religion *Lingayathism* was constitutionalized in a unique manner. In the historical development of religions, we usually see a prophet or a founder preaching a religion that is carried on through oral preachings which are later systematized and given a proper shape after a gap. *Lingayathism* was systematized hand in hand with its origin, or to express it more clearly, it was first systematized and later conveyed to the common masses. The reformative and prophetic *Lingayath* religion was systematized in an academy called "Anubhava Mantapa" which was established in 1140 A. D, at the city of Kalyana.

The house of religious experiences. Anubhava Mantapa is the unique contribution of Basaveshwara. This institution attracted seekers of truth so quickly that people from all castes, various occupations, and of different ranks gathered round the nucleus. This rare but monumental institution, also called Mahamane, Great House, contributed a vast quantity of mystic literature and a galaxy of seven hundred and seventy saints, together with thousands of followers within a short span of time. Among this constellation three hundred were writers, and sixty ladies were great saints, thirty of these produced a vast quantity of literature.

Many problems concerning the individuals and society were discussed in that assembly. When we go through the dialogues of Anubhava Mantapa we are surprised to see the first idea of a parliament generating in the history

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of mankind. Prabhudeva, a great Yogi of extraordinary achievement, was the president and Lord Basava acted as the prime minister. Chennabasava can be compared to the speaker while at the same time working as the editor, and compiler of *Vachana* literature. The only difference between the present day parliament and Anubhava Mantapa is that the members were not elected by the people, but were picked up or nominated by the higher authorities of the Mantapa; the necessary qualification expected being spiritual attainment. The problems tackled were of a various nature covering social, religious, spiritual, yogic psychological, economic and literary spheres.

Members of the Mantapa and followers of the religion were given full freedom of thought, speech and action. They were allowed to put any questions or doubts to get them cleared in front of the congregation and a systematic program was launched to record and to preserve the dialogues that were going on in the House. These discussions reminisced us of Dialogues of Plato, the great Greek philosopher. But they differ from the latter in being characterized by a high type of mystic experience. As silent documents we can see even today the caves cut out of the brittle stony hillocks, in and around the city of Kalyana. These mystics used to retire for the purpose of intense meditation. Mantapa can be called as Experimental Station where these mystic-scientists were engaged in finding out solutions for various problems of life, both spiritual as well as mundane.

The influence of the House of religious experience on society was immense, due to its multifarious attractions. The rational approach of the institution, and its simple as well as lucid way of communication, overcame the polytheistic and blind beliefs, which existed in the Hindu mind. The new approach, which was pragmatic, practical and realistic and the new concepts of God, soul, salvation etc were sowed in the minds of the common mass through community preaching. A direct method of worship and meditation without the intervention of any priest introduced a tremendous change in society along with an increase in the number of mystics. When the iron curtain of priests and temple craft which had stood between a sincere aspirants and God was cut, genuine seekers after religion were attached more and more towards religious values.

Mystic-philosophers of *Anubhava Mantapa* had no intention of

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withdrawing from society, from mundane problems, or from their worldly responsibilities, but tried instead to make their mortal life a means for salvation. That is why among the many rules of Anubhava Mantapa the first and a compulsory one was to take up a specific occupation. A person disinterested in '*Kayaka*' or profession would lose the privilege of obtaining membership of the academy. The idea behind this rule was that everybody's bread should be earned by the sweat of his own labour and he should neither become a parasite on nor an exploiter of society. We see in the literary record of Anubhava Mantapa the arrival of a great king Mahadeva Bhoopal from Kashmir, who renounced his kingdom, after being fascinated by Basava's philosophy. To secure membership of the House he had to take up the profession of wood-cutting.

Equal treatment was given to all the members of the Mantapa without any distinction of grade or caste. Haralayya, a shoemaker, was treated as equally and as nobly as Madarasa, a minister. Kakkayya, an untouchable, was equally respected, some times even more, than the Madhuvarasa who was a Brahmin by birth. Prabhudeva, the chairman of Anubhava Mantapa and a great yogi, was from the caste of "Natuvaras" who were considered as Sudras and lower castes in traditional Hindu society. He was installed as the first 'Adhikari' to the pontifical religious seat, Sunya Simhasana or the chair of perfection. He became the first Pope of *Lingayath Virakta* tradition or the traditions of ascetics. This challenge was a thunderbolt for the age old rigid caste system and a unique achievement of Anubhava Mantapa, which declared that.

The people of high caste, with their vested interests tried to impose on the ignorant masses the idea that the former are the issues of meritorious ancestry and that the latter are of sinful birth. Owing to their ignorance the low-casts and untouchables laboured under the delusion that they were born to be slaves because of the sins committed during and inherited from their past births. They believed that to strive to improve their miserable plight was a heinous sin, and that to live where and as they lived was their life's purpose as well as its fulfillment. There was a dire need to lift the evil of such illusions of inferiority. That is why, in order to brainwash this assimilated belief, Basava preached; "You too are human beings harboring the divine spark within you. You have every right to live as men and women in all respects equal to any

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one else, and the right to achieve saintliness and redemption". A sincere effort was launched to free both the high castes and the low castes from their respective superiority and inferiority complexes.

Anubhava Mantapa criticized sharply the meaningless differentiation of human beings as high or low either on their birth or on their occupation.

Unique preachings of equality charged with the acceptance of the parenthood of god and the fraternity of humanity fascinated the tortured minds and consoled the gasping hearts of the oppressed and distressed masses. The burning zeal of Basava to place religion on a democratic basis, his passionate love for God and his untiring energy in serving humanity added to the glory of Anubhava Mantapa.

Within a short span of time, the academy became well known all over the four corners of India, and even beyond her border to Afghanistan and Ceylon. Seekers of the truth from Kasmir to Ceylon, and from Afghanistan to Bengal flocked towards Kalyana. Marulu shankaradeva, a silent aspirant of the Mantapa is thought to be a convert from Sufism; and Singalada Siddabasavideva who wrote a commentary on the *Vachanas* of Basava was from Ceylon. The galaxies of saints were divided into three 1) *Avatarika Guru* 2) *SiddaGuru* and 3) *Sadhaka Guru*. Basava, believed to be the Avatarika, Primal *Guru* and founder of the Faith. Three great saints Prabhudeva, Chennabasava, Siddarama and the woman saint Akkamahadevi were sturdy pillars of the institutions, and were placed in the Siddaguru. Many other hundreds of great saints, who acted as different organs of the system were classified in the category of Sadhaka Gurus.

This missionary system introduced into society by the Anubhava Mantapa acted as a successful means of communication to inculcate the progressive ideas of *Lingayathism* and to enliven the spiritual urge hidden in the self of man. We hear from many literary sources of *Lingayathism* that these *Jangamas* travelled to far away places like Kashmir, Nepal etc, and attracted thinkers and sincere aspirants of truth towards the Kingdom of God. Thus due to its humanistic and compassionate outlook towards society and specially towards downtrodden people, Anubhava Mantapa became a spiritual power-house of that time ; it set on fire in many a clod soul and introduced a miraculous change in their lives. Stirring the minds of many sinful men

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and women it metamorphosised them into saints of an extraordinary caliber.

A point needs to be made clear before ending this issue. The *Lingayath* religion, being reformative in its outlook was more progressive than aggressive. It placed more emphasis on evolution by change of mind rather than on sanguinary revolution. So it is not to say that Basaveshwara and his followers were imbued with an antagonistic spirit towards any other community. But as, Rev. N. C. Sargent aptly says, "Basava's aim was not to oppose or propose any religious or philosophical system; but to show people the existing social and religious evils and, if possible, to remove these evils from society".

This institution is unique in several respects. In the history of spiritual movements in the world there is no other example, except that of Basava, where a founder of a faith or a reformer has adopted the democratic method of meeting together for discussing and for laying down the path of spiritual advancement and social reconstruction based on free thinking. Almost all the renowned teachers of the various countries in the world moved from place to place to preach their gospel or to interpret the earlier scriptures. Basava adopted a new method. He did not renounce life like Buddha nor did he move from place to place preaching the gospel. He did not write his commentaries like Sankara on old scriptures. He was a free thinker and led a host of people to think freely like him. The members of Anubhava Mantapa who participated in its deliberations followed various *Kayakas* or occupations. The deliberations and discussions took places in Kannada. They have been recorded in the form of *Vachanas*. Each saying or *Vachana* is a self-contained unit and is a free expression of the Sharanas on spiritual, ethical or economic subject.

The fundamental principles accepted by Basava and the other Sharanas of the Anubhava Mantapa may be summarized as follows:

All are equal; No man is high or low either by birth, sex or occupation. Woman has equal rights with man to follow the path of self-evolution. Each one should follow a profession of his own choice. All *Kayakas* are honorable professions. No *Kayaka* is either low or high. *Varnas* (or castes) and *Ashrams* (or stages) are to be discarded. Renunciation and dwelling in forest are ruled out as cowardly tendencies to escape from life. Inter-group marriages and free dining

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should be encouraged. Untouchability has no place in the society. Every man is free to think on all spiritual and social subjects. Reason and experience are the only guiding lights for free thinking and spiritual advancement. Language of the people should be the medium for imparting spiritual and secular education. All men have equal rights to participate in spiritual discussions, to acquire spiritual knowledge and follow the same path of self evolution (Javali, V. K, 2004: 139-144)

Equality and eradication of Untouchability

Basaveshwara led a social and religious revolution in order to kill the demon of caste and creed, which had threatened to rule the destiny of human beings in India on the basis of irrational notions of *Karma* or destiny. Born in to a Brahmin family, Basaveshvara set his own example by rejecting the ritual-ridden *Vedic* religion in favour of *Lingayathism*, an emerging vibrant religion having a great concern for the mankind as a whole including the ill treated, exploited and downtrodden classes of untouchables. Refusing to undergo the thread ceremony as per the Brahmin tradition, Basaveshvara championed the cause of the less privileged and led a revolution at the grass-root level. His revolution rallied around the low-caste people and created in them an awareness about the importance of their role in building the new community transcending the barriers of caste and establishing equality of social status and providing opportunities to blossom themselves out in all spheres of human life. He regarded all humans including the highborn priest and the lowborn untouchable as equal and gave them equal opportunities to work for their own salvation as well as for the welfare of others in the community. Basaveshwara's message to mankind was that religion and society are nobody's private properties and that all individuals are equal in the eyes of God and that they should be treated with equal justice and honor(Patil. J. S. 2005).

One of the most popular *Vachanas* of Basaveshvara, which gives a good impression of the close connection between social values and spirituality, is a situation of everyday life as narrated by him is as follows: "O Lord, let them not say; to whom belongs he, to whom, to whom? Let them say: he is ours, yes ours, ours! O Lord Kudala Sangama, Let them say: a son of your house!" In this *Vachana* Basaveshvara says that we should not question the people as to who they are. We should consider everyone as our own person. Every human being is a son of God and

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therefore he is our own man. Basaveshvara does not want even a stranger to be respected on the basis of his background, his family or caste, but he hopes to be admitted into the new circle of people who share the same spiritual heritage. This idea of universal brotherhood preached by Basaveshvara is in a way similar to the Hindu philosophy of *Vasudaivakutumbakam* under which entire mankind of the world is considered as one family. Basaveshvara works out the theme of the meaningless traditional divisions in contrast to the only real difference between people, which he sees in their attitude towards devotion. He says "I shall call all devotees of Siva equal, from *Brahmana* at one end, to the lowest-born man at the other end; I shall call all unbelievers equal, from the Brahmana

32. *Evanarava, evanarava, evanaravanendenisdirayya. eva nammava, eva nammava evanammavanendenisayya. Kudalasanganaama deva, nemma maneya mganendenisayya. SVS1/62*

at one end, to the untouchable at the other end; this is what my heart believes! In saying thisshould I have any doubt."

Here Basaveshvara explicitly refers to caste stratification, with Brahmana at the top and the low caste untouchable at the bottom, which has lost this meaning among the devotees of Lord Siva. In this way, the traditional division of the people into various castes is completely rejected. He rationally explains away the traditional caste divisions by adopting the most scientific method in the following *Vachana*: "The fetal seed cannot be implanted in the womb, except after menstrual flow. The function of semen-drops is ever the same; lust, greed, anger, joy and all other passions, are the same. One might read the sacred books, and hear the preaching of the sacred word; but what is the proof of one's high birth? The embryo is formed of the seven elements. It has the same birth in the same womb. The alliance of self and soul is ever the same. When born in the same way, all are one; none superior, none inferior. What is the usefulness of caste, that discriminates between human beings? As it is so, one became a blacksmith by heating iron; one became a washer man by washing clothes; one became a weaver by weaving cloth; one became a Haruva by reading the *Vedas*! Did anyone ever born through the ear? Therefore, one who knows the secret of the *Linga,* alone is well-born,"

Thus, all are born out of the same womb, whether they are of high-

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caste or untouchables and the soul is the same in all of them. Therefore, caste discriminations are of no use. Castes are nothing but occupational and functional groupings. On the basis of this idea, Basaveshvara rejected traditional classification of people into castes, but another division between devotees and worldlings that remains is no less strict than the old one. There are a few *Vachanas* in which Basaveshvara transcends all divisions. For example, he says that the earth on which all of us dwell is the same; and the water used for rites and other routine purposes is the same; hence there cannot be any person who can be condemned as an untouchable.

In this way, Basaveshvara uproots the conservative Indian understanding that the temple is ritually pure and the settlement of the untouchables a polluted place and must be avoided from ritual point of view. The temple is centrally situated, whereas the untouchables have their quarters outside the village or town. But the temple and the untouchables' settlement are both built upon the same earth, and in this image Basaveshvara connects both extremes of the purity scale. Further, he laments that it is the devotion of the devotee to Lord Siva that makes any place pure and significant and not by its ritualistic symbol.

Symbolism of *Linga* is related by Basaveshwara to his egalitarian social views. The effect of *Linga* worship means a drastic change in social circumstances. The message of the *Vachana* is very clear: because of the divine presence in the *Linga* even the community of the untouchables

33. *Deva, deva binnha avadharu;, vipr modalu, antyaja kadeyagi, shivabhaktaradavaranellanonde embe. Haruva modalu, shvapacha kadeyagi, bhaviyadavaranellanonde embe. Hingendu namubudenna mana. E nudiyolage ella moneyashtu sandehaullade, haliudore muga koyyi. Kudalasangamadeva. SVS1/711*

34. *Holegandallade pindada nelegashrayavilla, jala-binduvin vfyavaharvonde, Asheyamisharoshaharusha vishayadiglella vonde.enanodi, ena keli, enu phala? Kulajanembudakkavudu drashta?, saptadhatusamamo pindam samyonisamudbhavam. Atmajivasamayuktam varnananum kim prayojanam eMdodagi, kasi kammaranada, bisi mwivalnada, hasnikki saliganada, vedavanodi haruvnad, karnadlli janisidavrunte jagadolage? Edu karana kudalasangamadeva, lingastahalavanaridavanekulajanu. SVS1/590*

35. *Nelanonde:holgeri Shivalayakke, jalvonde: shauchachamanakke, kulvonde: tnna tAnridvNge, phalvonde: shadusrushana muktige, niluvonde: kudalasangamadeva, nimfmnaridavange. SVS1/879*

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can be elevated to the higher level. Just as the *Linga* can have an upgrading function for the untouchables, the reverse is also true and this is made evident by Basaveshvara in a metaphoric way when he says "What kind of man he might be, without the touch of *Linga* he is of inferior caste. But with the touch of *Linga* he gains a background, like the touch of the philosophers, Stone does change into gold. The Lord Kudala Sangama does not like those, who have all kinds of doubts about this."

The concept of *Linga* dispels all ritual purity and impurity. This is a revolutionary idea that could not even be thought by ordinary human beings at that point of time in 12th century when it was practically implemented by Basaveshvara. He brings out this revolutionary idea in a very lucid manner in the following *Vachana*: "Can there be impurity, where the *Linga* is? Can there be discrimination of caste? Where the *Jangama* is? Can *Prasada* be defiled, if it is tasted by the devotee, before offering it to *Jangama*? The impurity of unholy utterance is sin. None else but Lord Kudalasanga's devotees have achieved the consummation of the triple unity."

Basaveshwara's concepts of *Linga, Jangama and Prasada* clearly established the ineffectiveness and insignificance of pollution of caste, which made it possible for people of all castes to join *Veerashaiva* community. Wherever *Jangama* resides there shall not be any kind of discrimination based on caste. Tasting it before being served does not spoil food in terms of *Prasada* to be offered to *Jangama*. This is the way in which Basaveshvara filled rationality into the religious faith of *Lingayathism* and transformed it into a vibrant and socially relevant religion acceptable to everyone. Many people belonging to low-castes and untouchables were attracted by the teachings of Basaveshvara and joined his movement for the establishment of casteless society.

Basaveshvara would not call any devotee of Siva by his caste, and never called himself by any caste. He would condemn the people including himself if it were to be an attempt to identify people on the basis of their caste. So he asked in a pungent way "Can I call Siriyala a tradesman, And Machayya a washer man? Can I call Kakkayya a tanner, And Channayya a cobbler? And if I call myself a *Haruva,* Lord Kudalasangama will just laugh at me."

Basaveshvara himself practiced first whatever he would preach others. To weed out the ideas of caste from the minds of the people he

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did not even hesitate a bit to identify himself as a relative of untouchables and felt proud of it. This point is made out by Basaveshvara again and again to root out the devil of caste from the minds of the people, which was so deep rooted in them. *Vachanas* narrating his relationship with the so-called low-caste people are abound and a few are narrated here to reveal the ideological base upon which his notion of secular society is built up. In a *Vachana* Basaveshvara narrates his relationship with the elders coming from the untouchable sector and pleads with the Lord about his identity on the basis of his relation with these people, in the following manner: "Our Madara Channayya is my father; Our Dohara

36. *Parusha muttida balika kabbunavagadu noḍa, linga muttida balika kuchittacharavagadu noda, kudalasangana sharanru anyavanariyaragi. SVS1/137*
37. *Lingadalli kathinavunte? Jangamadalli kulavunte? Prasadadalli aruchiyun te? E trividhadalli bhavabhedhavanarasuvenu, kudalasangamadeva, dha(ra)vattalenna bhakti SVS1/286*
38. *Settioyembene siriyalana? Madivalanembene machayyana? Doharanembene kakkayyana? Madarnenmbene chennayyana? Anu haruvnebdade kudalasangayya naguvanayya.SVS 1/345*

Kakkayya is my elder uncle; Look, Chikkayya is my grand-father; Our Kinnara Bommayya is my brother; Then how do you not know me, O Lord Kudalasangama"

In this way, it is the low-caste people that constituted his family pedigree. During the period of Basaveshvara the high-caste people as a matter of right took low-caste people for illicit sexual relationships. The low-caste was always blamed as not having a good family background precisely because of this reason. To nullify this unfounded blameworthy attitude towards the low-caste people, Basawshwara describes and eulogizes his new family ties in a piercing language in *Vachana* in the following way: "The boy of the servant in Channayya's house, And the girl of the maid in Kakkayya's house , They went both to the field to gather dung, And then they made love. A child was born to them that was me. Lord Kudala Sangama is the witness to this!"

There cannot be any other better way than this to castigate the people who insulted low-cast people for the sexual exploitation they are subjected to by the higher ups in the society. Basaveshvara calls himself

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a product of one such illicit relationship. More so the relationship is between the lowest of the lowest being the children of the servants in the houses of untouchables. There could not be any other fellow who can be described as inferior to a child born of such a relationship. By claiming his social status as of such condemnable type he opens the eyes of the people as to their mistakes in ill-treating the low-caste people. When jealous persons jeered at him saying that he had no roots in the new religion since he had no relations there, he boldly answered them in the following *Vachana*: "You can say I have no kin, why? Nimbavve is my mother: She lives by fetching water; Chennayya is my father: He fetches fodder for the royal stable. You say I have no kin, why? I have a sister who cooks at Kanchi, O Lord Kudala Sangama, I but receive through your hands, the devotion my ancestors have hoarded."

Basaveshwara measured the worth of a man by his conduct and character and not by his caste. He used caste concept in a new sense in his moral teachings. A person is high-caste or low-caste not by birth but by his deeds. This can be seen in a series of *Vachanas* written by him

An untouchable is one who is involved in evil actions, hurts others and is bad he says, in his character. He who wishes good to others is a man of real caste. Character is vehemently emphasized as the main consideration for a man to be described as of high or low status. Basaveshvara was unequivocal in praising those who were good in their character and deeds irrespective of the fact whether they were born in a high-caste or low-caste.

Madara Channayya, who was an untouchable by caste and about whom Basaveshvara had a very high regard as a great devotee of the Lord and whom he respected as his father, was also a great *Sharana* and has formulated a number of *Vachanas* reflecting the same ideas as those of Basaveshvara regarding the problem of untouchability. According to him, if one's word and action

39. *Appany namma madara chennayya, boppanu namma dohara kakkayya, chikkayyanemmayya kanayya, annanu namma kinnara bommayya, ennanetakkariyiri, kudalasangamadeva? SVS1/349*
40. *Chennayyaana maneya dasana maganu, kakkayyana maneya dasiymaglu, evaribbaru holdalu bernige hogi sangavamadidaru. Evaribbarige huttida maga nanu. Kudalasangamadeva sakshiyagi. SVS1/346*

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41. *Emma tayi nimbiyavve nirneranedumbalu, emmayya chennayya rayakampanava heruv, emage aru ellavembiri, emmakka kanchiyalli banasava maduvlu. Emage aruu ellavembiri, emma ajjara ajjaru hadeda bhaktiya nimma kayyalu kombe, kudalasangamadeva. SVS1/352.*
42. *Koluvvane madiga, hoalsu timbavane holeya. Kulaveno Avandira kulveno? Sakalajivatmarige lesane bayasuva, namma kudalasangana sharanare kulajaru. SVS1/591*

are in agreement, then he belongs to high caste. If they are not in agreement then such a person cannot be of high caste, right action signifies high caste and wrong action, low caste.

Another contemporary of Basaveshvara was in full praise of Prabhudeva, the presiding deity of Sunya Simhasana in Anubhava Mantapa, for his kindness in elevating the people belonging to the lower-caste. Dohara Kakkayya expresses his gratitude to Basaveshvara for his kindness and grace in elevating him from the ordinary plane to the higher plane of life. He praises Allama for touching him and sanctifying him from his divine touch. *Linga* is a divine instrument to adorn the body of every *Sharana* to elevate him from his low-status to higher-status. He narrates the thrilling experience of electrified change that takes place in his body by the touch of *Linga*. This is how the whole movement becomes the saga of wonderful experiences of elevation of everyone of them onto the same plane by same process of wearing of *Linga* irrespective of the caste or creed in which they were born. *Vachanas* of the above type indicate how these Sharanas redeemed themselves of the taints of caste, of body and mind, of senses, life and will, of ignorance and forgetfulness with the aid of Basavanna.

Basaveshvara as a spiritual physician felt and realised the need for preparing the minds and hearts of people for generating the spirit of emotional integration, eschewing artificially created caste barriers. He was fully convinced that the political stability, economic prosperity, social cohesion, and ideas on unity and equality could be achieved only through the spirit of emotional integration. He did not merely preach solutions to do away with the evils of caste system and practice of untouchability, but practiced them himself. He was convinced that the evil of untouchability can be erased out of the society by developing the practice of inter-dining and inter-marriage, which he started as an invincible movement and able to penetrate the minds of people to a great extent.

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As regard to inter-dining, Basaveshvara himself used to visit the untouchables' colony and mix up with the people there. One day, while moving about in that area, Basaveshvara entered the house of an untouchable devotee named Kambaliya Nagideva and took his food. This matter was immediately reported to the king Bijjala that by his promiscuous intercourse with the untouchables, Basaveshvara is spilling disaster around. When reprimanded by the king for his reckless behaviour, Basaveshvara stood firm and justified his conduct proclaiming that there was no difference between men and men or a low-born untouchable and a learned Brahmana. According to Basaveshvara, in the spheres of marriage and sharing of food and other things caste should not become a hurdle. If any one tries to make use of caste as a weapon to prevent inter-caste marriage and inter-dining, he is not a true devotee of Lord *Shiva*. He is like an impure woman taking bath in pure water.

He tells the people that even the Lord takes food in the house of a devotee who belongs to the caste of untouchables and wears their clothes and sees the human world through their eyes. When the Lord *Shiva* himself does not discriminate, how can ordinary human beings do that?

Basaveshvara beautifully explains how Hindu traditionalism was shaken by the consumption of food by Lord *Shiva* in an untouchable, Channayya's house: when he says "Because our Lord Kudala Sangama, Ate at the low-born Channayya's house: The *Veda* trembled

43. *They say their vows of righteous! Living was infringed, by eating at the house of untouchables! And by wearing their clothes! They look for caste in making marriages! How can I call them devotees? How can I call them worthies? Listen, O Lord Kudalasangama! Their behavior is like that of an! Impure woman bathing in pure water.*

in fear; The *Shastra* stepped aside; The Tarka, unable to argue, became dumb; The *Agama* swerved away from its path." This *Vachana* indicates symbolically the of failure the traditional instruments like *Veda, Shastra, Tarka* and *Agama* to stand in the way of rationally conceived social and religious revolution that was taking place during that point of time. All these traditional weapons upon which the Hindu tradition of untouchability was built become ineffective and were unable to answer the questions raised by the revolutionaries regarding the heinous practice of untouchability. Basaveshvara goes even a step ahead in another *Vachana*, where he says that the food that is being cooked by a Svapacha of a dead dog's meat gets

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spoiled by the very shade of a Brahmana falling upon it and therefore it cannot be offered to *Linga* as a *Prasada*:

This is the most offensive way in which he defends the low-caste devotees doing their routine of offerings to the *Linga*. Any individual, even if he is a Brahmin by birth, should not watch the cooking of food to be offered to the *Linga*, if that person is not a true devotee. By the very sight of such worldly persons the food being cooked becomes impure. Therefore, it can be rightly be covered by the slippers of a devotee to protect it from becoming impure. In this way, Basaveshvara asserts that the slippers of *Sharanas* are much superior to the eyes of the *Brahmins* who have lost their credibility. Basaveshvara had gone to unimaginable levels in providing dignity to the lowborn. In an exaggerated version of a *Vachana*, Basaveshvara even goes to the extent of saying that he would eat the pan chewed by them, wear the clothes cast off by them and guard their slippers, if only they are the Lord's devotees irrespective of the fact that they are untouchables

He castigates those who question the credibility of an untouchable devotee about his impure way of living and eating. Devotion is the main force of purity and not the externally visible aspects of it. He exhibits his restlessness when these low-caste people show apprehension in giving him food as he belonged to a superior caste in a *Vachana* in his indubitable style: "Lord, do not lay on me the burden, of being born in a superior caste. Look, Kakkayya will not offer, even the cast-off food to me. Look, Dasayya will not offer, Even the buttermilk to me. The reverend Channayya will not accept me, Alas! Alas! Lord Kudala Sangama!"

In the *Anubhava Mantapa*, which he had established as a democratic forum for divine and intellectual discussion and discourse and thereby found solutions to all kinds of social, economic and religious problems, Basaveshvara advocated the eradication of untouchability.

It is very important to note that the movement led by Basaveshvara against the practice of untouchability was at a time when it was just not possible for any one to think in those lines. Such was the truth-value of his ideas that even after eight hundred years his ideas remain relevant to our society. It is true that his war against the practice of untouchability was disturbed by some

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44. *Veda nadanad nadugittu, shastravagali kelkke saridadittayya! Tarka tarkisalariyade muguvattidditayya!agama heratolagi agalidditayya! Namm kudalasangayyanu madara chennayyana maneyalundakarana SVS1/750*
45. *The pot in which the superiors cook food! Is a dog's skull, sir. The low-caste Svapacha's act of covering food with slippers! Lest the high-caste Samavedi cast eyes on it is a right one! It's Agama in practice; none should see him preparing food. That "the food seen by the worldly is unworthy of! Offering to the Linga" is Thy word! Lord Kudala Sangama!*
46. *Aavanadadenu shreemahadevana nenevana, bayatambula meluve, biludugeya hodeve, padaraksheya kaydu bdukuve, kudalasangamadeva. SVS1/464*
47. *Uttama kuladlli huttidenmba, kastatanada horya horisadirayya, kakkayyanokkudanikka nodayya, dasayya shivadanavnereya nodayya, mannaneya cennayyanennuva mannisa. Unnata mahima, kudalasangmadeva shivadho shivadho!SVS1/344*

traditional minds that were successful in spoiting the ears of the ruler of the kingdom. But the point to be noted is that his idea of abolition of untouchability was a great idea. Though his movement failed, his idea did not fail. It continued to linger in the minds of the people of the country and got its due recognition under the Constitution when India became independent. It is in this way Basaveshvara and his ideas become relevant to 21st century.

Gender equality

If one makes the perusal of the classical religio-juridical literature, the *Dharmashastras,* the position of women in early India, appears to be miserable and degrading. *Manusmriti* contains verses, which are explicitly hostile towards women. The lawgiver warns men about women whose nature it is to seduce men. In a well-known verse, it is stated that a woman always needs protection by men: her father protects her in childhood, her husband protects her in her youth and in her old age, and her sons will protect her. A married woman should worship her husband constantly as a god, whatever be his character. Furthermore, all kinds of bad qualities are attributed to women in *Manusmriti*. They are created with a predilection for bed, seat and ornaments, with desire, fervor and unreliability, with a hostile disposition and evil conduct. Like this, the tendency was to present a pessimistic picture of the status of women during the ancient times.

This is only one aspect of the story. There is the other aspect under which, favorable interpretations can also be found in the classical Indian literature regarding the status of women. *Dharmashastra* raised a

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chaste wife to the rank of a goddess; it raised the mother to the rank of divinity, along with the teacher and the father, and placed them immeasurably below her to the right to love and veneration. She is the best of the teachers, and a super-teacher according to *Vishnusmriti.* So long as one has a mother he never feels old. Abandoning a mother, even if she is an outcaste, is both a sin and a crime. The first earnings of the student must be tendered to his mother.

The position of women in Medieval Karnataka was astonishingly different from what the laws of *Manu* suggest. Women were dominant not only in the cultural field; they were as much active in exercising their political power. The contribution of women in religious and other social activities of the society were in no way inferior to that of men. The status of women was as high as that of men in the middle Ages in Karnataka.

In the entire Indian history, Medieval Karnataka stands as a unique period and place where movements for the emancipation of women from the traditional taboos were led by social reformers. Basaveshwara's social movement during 12th century was one such great movement, which brought about revolutionary changes in socio-legal conditions of women (Patil. J. S. 2005).

Basaveshwara and other *Sharanas* of his time have made exclusive efforts by putting all their energy for building a society of equals where both men and women could participate in spiritual and religious spheres of human activities on an equal footing. Discrimination or exploitation of women on the basis of sex is against the very principle of rationalism that was developed by Basaveshvara. The socio-religious movement led by Basaveshvara against the discrimination of caste, creed or sex attracted people from across the country including women. According to the *Lingayathism* of which Basaveshvara was a champion, men and women differ only in physiological level but they are one and the same in metaphysical aspect.

The *Shivasharanas* of 12th century understood and realized the position of women of their time and provided an equal status and opportunity on par with men in spiritual matters. Their action towards the emancipation of women can be considered as the first such movement systematically launched in country. The system of family preached by the *Sharanas* is quite unique, for spirituality is the starting point for any transformation to take place at the level of family which

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can have its influence upon the society as a whole. Therefore the *Sharanas* propounded the concept of equality between men and women first from the spiritual level According to the *Sharanas*, the soul is basically the same; it is only the body which appears as man and woman.

The *Lingayath* view of a man and woman can be best understood by the following *Vachana* of Devara Dasimayya, an elderly contemporary of who was deeply influenced by the philosophy of Basaveshvara: "A woman is identified, By her breasts and plaits, And a man, by his beards and mustaches, But the soul within the two, Is neither woman nor man, O lord Ramanatha."

The *Sharanas* have also pointed out that woman is not an illusion, but a living being like man in every walk of life. Considering woman as an illusion represents the self-aggrandizement of the male, which is unfair. Allama Prabhu, the presiding deity of the *Anubhava Mantapa*, a seat of intellectual discourse about the socio-religious aspects of human life exalts as under: "They say that woman is an enticement, No, no, she is not so. The real enticement is the insatiable appetite of mind, O Lord Guheshwara."

All *Sharanas* including Basaveshwara unanimously shared this view. Woman, property and wealth are not temptations. The real cause of temptation is man's uncontrolled and unchecked inner desire to possess them.

The *Sharanas* raise the question that when both men and women are made of the same metal why is it that one only can attain divinity? On the basis of this argument the *Lingayatha* philosophy does not dismiss woman as an obstacle in the path of spirituality. Siddharama, a notable *Sharana* of Basaveshwara's time upholding the nobility of womanhood proclaims that she is the embodiment of the God!

One of the distinguished female saint who emerged as colossus in the social revolution championed under the leadership of Basaveshvara was Akkamahadevi. She received highest praise from Basaveshvara because of her sheer perseverance and deep commitment to the ideas of liberation of the soul. Basaveshvara described Akkamahadevi as his mother and finds no appropriate words to praise her. Basaveshvara and other *Sharanas* joined in the chorus of her praise, as she was considered as the main source of *Bhakti*, *Mukti* and *Yukti*. In the same way Akkamahadevi also referred to Basaveshvara as her spiritual father. On the guidance and the spiritual leadership of Basaveshvara,

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Akkamahadevi contributed considerably to the cause of womanhood. Although she was married to king Kaushika, she did not consider herself as his wife. She even tried to enlighten him when he tried to molest her in the following *Vachana*: "Get back, I hate you, don't hold my sari, you fool, a she-buffalo is worried of its life, and the butcher, of its killings, the pious thinks of virtues, And the wicked of vices. I am worried of my self and you of lust. Listen, the only worry that haunts me is: whether my Lord Chenna Mallikarjuna, loves me or

48. *Mole mudi bandade hennembaru. Gadda mise bandade gandembaru. Naduve sulivatmanu, hennuu alla ganduu alla kana! Ramanatha SVS7/844/135*
49. *Honnu mayeembaru, honnu mayeyalla, hennu mayeembaru, hennu mayeyalla, mannu mayeyembaru, mannu mayeyalla, manada mundane aseye maye kana Guheshvara. SVS2/72*

not." Realizing that she can no longer stay with him, she throws away all her clothes at him and walks to the streets quite nude. The king was staggered and dazzled to see all such spiritual lustre of Akkamahadevi. It is said that he repented and cursed himself for having stretched his sinful hands on to her spiritual heights.

Akkamahadevi makes an appeal and also gives warning to such men, who have that lust or temptation, to tease or harass women. She appears to be the first and the most courageous woman of the spiritual world of womanhood.

She lambastes all such men who try to look at her nude body with passion. After renouncing her husband King Kaushika and worldliness, she goes in search of her real husband Lord Mallikarjuna whom she describes as eternal, immortal, ever beautiful and changeless.

When Akkamahadevi enters the *Anubhava Mantapa*, all *Sharanas* including Allama Prabhu and Basaveshwara put her to very stringent tests of spiritualism and thereafter accord her a hearty and warm welcome appreciating her attainments of spiritual heights. All of them were surprised to see how she could overcome the bodily passions at such a young age. All *Sharanas* and *Shivasharanas* involved in the movement, asserting the principle of equality on the basis of soul, contributed to the women's movement to transcend material demands and aim at spiritual attainments. It was a movement against the exploitation of women in the name of religion. Basaveshvara, who

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spearheaded the movement, was determined to abolish all obstacles and social disabilities inherent in the traditional order. Sharing the experiences and thoughts of all the activists of the movement, Basaveshvara asked: "What is the sex of the soul?" He attached importance to the principle of *Kayaka*, in which, every man and woman are engaged and actively participated in spiritual discourses and deliberations at Anubhava Mantapa. On this basis he undertook the mission of elevating the womanhood by the introduction of the ceremony of *Linga Deeksha*, thereby giving them equal opportunity in religious and spiritual activities along with men.

If one looks at the fundamental principles accepted by Basaveshvara and other Sharanas of Anubhava Mantapa, following principles clearly indicate the concern they had for the emancipation of women:

- No one is high or low either by birth, sex or occupation.
- There is no discrimination between man and man and between man and woman.
- Woman has equal rights with man to follow the path of self-evolution.
- Woman can also take up any *Kayaka*.
- Inter-group marriages and free dining should be encouraged.

These principles indicate that discrimination against women only on the basis of sex is challenged in the twelfth century itself. Women were provided equal rights along with men for the purpose of developing their personalities. Women were permitted to take up any kind of work of their choice and have economic independence. Women were free to marry even from other castes.

50. *Emmegondu chinte, samgArnigondu chinte; dharmigondu chinte, karmigondu chinte, enge enna chinte, tanage tanna kamada chinte, olle hogu, serge biwu mrule.*

Enge chennamallikarjuna devru valivaro valiyaro emba chinte! SVS 5/108

Many of these principles have found their way into the Indian Constitution even after 800 years, which shows how worthy these principles are.

Basaveshwara has given out a few *Vachanas* where he makes a reference to how woman is to be looked upon. In all these *Vachanas* the main point, which he drives home to his followers, is that to desire another man's wife is a sin. All *Vachanas* express the spiritual view that

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the male devotee regards himself as the wife of Lord *Shiva*, his relationship with *Linga* is a marriage in which he is the female having subordinate position. Basaveshwara himself has expressed this view in very clear terms in the following *Vachana*: "Listen to me dear fellows; I wear these men's clothes, only for you... Some times I am a man, Some times I am a woman, O Lord Kudala Sangama."

Another important idea put forward by Basaveshvara is that both husband and wife should be clean, like inside and outside of a pot. Otherwise, their married life would be like a washing of the arrack pot only from outside. He has stated this "Husband a devotee of *Shivalinga*, Wife, a devotee of Mari, Masani, Husband takes offerings, made to God, Wife takes arrack and flesh., The devotion of those whose containers, And the food are not clean,. It is like washing the arrack pot, from the outside, Kudala Sangamadeva."

Basaveshwara asserts that in material relations the caste or the clan should not become an obstacle. Both husband and wife should become the consorts of the *Linga*, in that the *Sharana* is the wife and the *Linga* is the husband. Basaveshvara was comparing the spiritual seeker to the wife and the Divine Being to the husband. Further, there must be similar spiritual relationship between the husband and the wife. A chaste lady remains ever dutiful to her husband and will not resort to any immoral life even if her husband turns out to be indifferent or shows no love for her. In the same way, a true devotee cherishes firm faith only in one God, the supreme, as a faithful wife has only one husband. This is how he spiritually rationalizes the wifehood in his *Vachana*: "Behold a faithful wife has but one husband. Behold a devotee, the true believer, has but one God, Look, the fellowship of other gods in base, Look, to speak of other gods in harlotry, should Lord Kudalasangama see it, Look you, he will cut off your nose." This *Vachana* makes it clear that belief in many Gods and husbands is nothing but a religious infidelity. Faith in only one God is the way for attainment of spiritual progress in life. For this reason Basaveshvara emphasizes the importance monotheism.

One cannot collect a good number of *Vachanas* and say that this collection is as good as a treatise of Basaveshvara in the cause of women's emancipation. Such a theoretical treatise is unthinkable of Basaveshvara. He was a mystic with unrivalled practical knowledge of the world. He thought that practice was better than either pleading or

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preaching. We get evidence of his broad view of women in his treatment of his wife, Neelambike, his sister Nagalambike and a good number of women-saints who participated in the religious discussions at the Anubhavamantapa. Both married and unmarried women were there among the women saints. Basaveshvara never laid down that a wife could be an obstacle to high spiritual attainments. His wife enjoyed a good deal

51. *Ganda shivalingadevara bhakta, hendati marimasaneya bhakte, gandakombudu padodaka Prasada, hendati kombudu sur-mamsa, bhanda-bhajana shuddavilladavara bhakti, hendada mawikeya horge tolednate, kudalasangamadeva. SVS1/104*
52. *Nambida hendatige gandnobbane kaniro, nababalla bhaktange devnobbne kaniro, beda beda, annya daivada sang holla! Beda beda, paradaivada sanga holla! Beda beda, anya daivavembudu hadar kaniro, kudalasangamadeva kandade muga koyva kaniro.SVS1/617*

of freedom and was close followers of him and helped him in his discharge of political and religious duties.

But at the same time considerable importance is given for the character of women. In some of his *Vachanas*, Basaveshvara insisted that women should be faithful to their husbands and disapproved of adultery.

The harsh verdict of Basaveshvara towards adulterous women is metaphorical. The unfaithful wife is an image of the devotee who is not faithful to Lord *Shiva* but worships other deities as well. In another *Vachana* the theme of unfaithful woman is worked out in a very beautiful manner:

I went out for an adulterous play,
But all I got was counterfeit.
Behind a dilapidated wall I hid,
But there the scorpions stung me.
The watchman heard my cries
And he tore off my sari.
I went home in utter shame
And my husband slashed my back.
So the Lord Kudalasangama took his fine.

The meaning of this simile is that adversity and trouble are not accidental, but they can be seen, as a punishment from God, for

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adulterous behavior, whether in the realm of morality or in that of worship, will have such inevitable consequences. Hence, alongside the liberation of women from all kinds of exploitations, Basaveshvara has balanced his movement by insisting upon the good character of women.

If character is so vehemently insisted upon by Basaveshvara, at the same time his attempts to uplift the low-caste women by absorbing them into the mainstream of life and describing them as "P*unyastri*" or "meritorious woman" is noteworthy. The *Veerashaiva* sources indicate that the spiritual community attracted many wandering ascetics from various schools. It is not hard to imagine that *Tantra* mendicants or so-called sensual *Jangamas* too found their way to Basaveshwara's Center. Even a number of temple girls or the girls who are put as prostitutes in temples according to some religious practices also followed the new devotional movement of Basaveshvara. An example of Sankavve and her *Vachana* is significant in this regard: "I took a pledge; I shall not take another one. If I would do so, they would strip me naked, and kill me. If I would deliberately associate myself with one, who breaks the vow, they would chop off my hands, ears and nose, with a glowing knife. I will certainly not do so knowingly, O Lord of No Shame.

This *Vachana* stands as a good example of the spirituality of the women who left her sensual life. The theme of this *Vachana* is monotheism. Sankavve uses similes from her

53. *What a surprise! The ruin of you, you bitch! Making eyes at your lover! Whilst you have a husband! Who gives you food and clothes! The Lord Kudalasangama! Will chop off your pretty nose! So that your teeth stick out.*

professional background to explain the theme. In her ardent style, she not only stresses the loyalty to *Shiva*; she also reveals the morality of her professional life.

The life stories of some of the female saints give a good impression of the position of women in the movement. Men and women on an equal footing made discourses in the Anubhavamantapa. Highly unconventional women-saints like Akkamahadevi not only found prominent place in the movement but also its most accomplished female mystic and poet. Another profound philosopher who could develop her talents in the company of devotees is Muktayakka. However, the female ascetics were not the most remarkable characters among the women of Basaveshwara's fold; because their way of life was

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modelled on the classical pattern of world-renunciation. A completely new phenomenon was the participation of married women in the movement. Among them Neelamma was the most brilliant and independent thinker. Mahadeviyamma was also a very influential teacher and poet. Both had the advantage of a privileged position in the community; but there were also women devotees of lower castes. The working in the community constitute a convincing proof that the revolutionary ideas of the *Vachana*karas about the equality of men and women led to new opportunities for women, even from traditionally unlearned circles. Low-caste women like spinners, rice pounders and sweepers were allowed to participate in the discussion and share their experiences in the spiritual path. Ayadakki Marayya's wife Lakkamma is one such example. She not only participated in the discourses at the *Anubhavamantapa,* but also guided her husband when he neglected his duty. Her concern is that no one should neglect his duty. She tells him almost scoldingly to get on to his work first, or else it amounts to disservice to God. When her husband awakes to the vital importance of *Kayaka* and *Dashooha* and in his hurry collects double the usual quantity, she gets offended and says as follows in a *Vachana*: "This greed is good for kings; what has a *Shiva* devotee, my Lord, to do with such?"

She directs the husband to drop back the surplus rice grains and invite all the Sharanas, including Basaveshvara, for food. When all of them were mysteriously fed to the full satisfaction, all of them were wonderstruck. This is the greatest example of sustainable use of the natural resources and safeguarding them from depletion. This philosophy of Lakkamma also speaks volumes in terms of intergenerational trust and responsibility of which we talk so loudly in the modern context.

Another example is that of Mahadeviyamma wife of Moligeya Marayya. When Marayya exhibits his yearning for union with the Divine impatiently, she was surprised. She wakes up her husband to the essentials of the *Sharana* way. All the movements of a *Sharana* are rooted in non-duality. When this has been attained, there is no need to hanker after further union. She gives the analogy of conjugal union, which demands the stripping of all robes, ornaments and so on, which come in the way. Delusion of body is like robes. When these delusions are removed, the idea of the heaven and the Union vanishes. She says:

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"Why, sir, this sense of twain, within your wisdom, that you should want, to join the other? When a grove of camphor burns in fire, Can you detect charcoal and ash? Do realize your heart unto yourself; do realize how you dispelled, my shyness when we came together."

Marayya acknowledges the wisdom of his wife and becomes one with his own self, and then Mahahdeviyamma also attains salvation after helping her husband to attain the eternity.

Thus, it is not surprising that women were sometimes portrayed as no less than the Divine itself.

Sidharameshwara describes the exalted position of woman with reference to mythological accounts in the *Vachana*. *Ganga* seated in *Shiva*'s head and Parvati on his lap, Saraswati on Brahma's tongue and Lakshmi leaning against Vishnu's chest. If the Gods appreciate female company that much, woman cannot be sexual object or demonic power; but they must be divine.. Though this exaltation is historically unrealistic, the disregard for women which was so deeply rooted in Hindu culture was certainly removed in the *Lingayath movement* led by Basaveshvara. There are a good number of reformers who worked for securing social, economic and political rights for women. But none worked to secure equal rights in the field of religion. Basaveshvara is the only one who declared that woman is entitled to religious initiation and salvation same as man.

Lingayath faith is altogether independent of the Hindu religion. Hinduism is primarily based on the authoritativeness of the Vedas and the Varnashramadharma. As Lingayathism repudiates the distinctions of caste, it is said to be non-Hindu in spirit.

Features of Lingayathism such as *Shaktivishishtadvaita, Astavarana, Panchachara, Shatasthala,* Universal fraternity, worship of only formless God, Gender equality, Equality, Denial of untouchability and Idol worship, *Kayaka* and *Dashooha,* provide abundant evidence to consider Lingayathism as progressive, scientific, and world humanitarian religion.

54. *Ta madida hennu tanna taleyanerittu, ta madia hennu tann todeyanerittu, ta madida hennu Brahmana naligeyanerittu, ta madida hennu narayana edeyanerittu, adu karana, hennu hennalla, hennu rakshashiyalla; hennu pratyaksha kapilasiddamallikarjuna SVS4/618.*

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CHAPTER- II

ESSENTIAL FEATURE S OF LINGAYATHISM

The present chapter discusses the essential features of Lingayathism in order to establish the independent status and unique nature of its teachings. Following the discussion on the status and the founder of Lingayathism. The chapter tries to discuss its essential features such as the philosophy of Shaktivishishtadvaita, Astavarana, Panchachara, Shatasthala and the worship of Istalinga. Along with these some social innovations of Basaveshwara such as Kayaka, Dashooha and Anubhava Mantapa are discussed which paved the way for both social and gender equality.

Lingayathism is often confused as the part or sect of the Hinduism, because the origin of *Lingayathism* is from the Hindu society. It seems to be so, because the *Lingayathism* has not yet proved its independent existence. Some of the doctrines of Hindu culture are accepted by the *Lingayathism*.

The Status of Lingayath religion

Determining the status of the *Lingayath* religion is a knotty problem, whether it is a independent religion or a sub-religion of Hinduism is the concern of the present study. *Lingayaths* are generally considered to be a sect among the Hindus or a subsect of the Shaivas. *Shaivism* itself is generally considered as *Vedic* religion or a sub-religion of Hinduism. Hence, in the first place it has fallen in such deep obscurity that it seems rather difficult to rouse up from the obscurity. It may naturally claim to have its account of intrinsic value and merit.

To determine the status of *Lingayath* religion among the broad perspective Hinduism, it is necessary for us to know what Hindu religion is which the Hindus as a body social, political and religious are expected to profess and to being. But it is impossible to say what Hindu religion or Hinduism is, if it is to be a common denominator or the highest common factor of all the Hindu communities of India. Generally Hindu religion is taken to be the religion as taught by the *Vedas*. But what is the religion that is taught by the *Vedas*? This is the most puzzling question; and answer to the question is bound to be equally puzzling and controversial. The *Veda* does not teach any one religion but a variety wide of religions; they not only teach some common religious

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philosophy about a variety of philosophy by different schools of philosophical thought; they do not lay down any common religious practice and customs but a multiplicity of rules of religion and custom. It is this variety that has been an object of pride for the Hindus, who say with a sense of elation that Hinduism is a form of eclectic religion having every thing in it. At the most it may be said that the *Vedas*, especially the *Upanishads*, are a literature of profound learning and thoughts being the result of inner spiritual experiences of great ancient sages, regarding the cosmic principle, the cosmic evolution, involution and life, the working of the Universe and the individual souls and advice given to the individual souls to follow a spiritual life to be free from the trammels of the worldly life. But they do not teach any common principles of religion and spiritual life. The four main *Vedas* and the Brahmans mainly elaborate the performance and procedure of sacrifices, though some portions of *RigVeda* contain verses full of deep philosophical thoughts. It is the *Aranyakas* (forest dwelling sages) and the *Upanishads* that contain most vivid and everlasting thought of spiritual experiences and spiritual life. But they do not give any one consistent religion for all to follow. They are merely rich in philosophical speculations and experiences, too obscure to be understood.

Hindu religion is defined as the religion of *Varnashramadharma* which is based on the principle of innate inequality of human beings, and, therefore, lays stress on the inherent incapability of the constituent human beings of the body political and social to have an equal right and share in social and religious practices. The *Varnashramadharma* may be fundamentally reduced to three main characteristics of social and religious-life. 1) The four castes or colors (Varna), 2) the four stages of life (Ashrams).3) and the duties, assigned to the four castes and stages. The third characteristic is further elaborated into 1) different worldly duties assigned to be discharged by the four castes *(Varnadharma)*, 2) and sixteen religious *Samskaras* sacramental rites like *Garbhadan, Punsvan, Jaatkarm, Namkaran* etc. These sixteen sacramental rites are the special privileges of the first three classes. The Shudras, whose duty is only to serve obediently the first three castes like slave, are altogether excluded from the sixteen rites. The exclusion of a particular section of community from these religious rites and its consequent exclusion from intellectual and spiritual life is quite an iniquitous and opprobrious thing

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in the world. It seems that at the beginning members of the community were considered as different castes in accordance with their mental and intellectual caliber and physical fitness for particular worldly duties. Then there was some change in the *Varnashramadharma.* But gradually it was based on birth alone. This made the *Varnashramadharma* the most unjust social institution. Being excluded from the sixteen sacramental rites, the *Shudras* came to be reduced to the status of serfs who served the three upper castes. Another notable thing is that the women of the first three castes were considered equal to *Shudras* in status. And therefore, they were assigned the duties of domestic affairs and of serving their husbands to attain *Mukti*. They are thus considered as merely an object of pleasure and only the means of racepropagation. This is also unequally iniquitous thing. It was not possible to understand the reason of the exclusion of all women from the *Samskaras*. It was not possible (at least for us) to understand the meaning of *Punsvan,* which apparently meant causing the birth of male children. If the *Samskaras* were intended to have only male children and if they were efficient it would amount to say that there would be only males and no females at all. Consequently, there would be no further propagation of the race. The *Lingayath* religion has done away with it and ushered in a new era of socio-religious life. The eradication of *Varnashramadharm*a from the new socio-religious system is found in all *Lingayath* religious books. The status of *Lingayaths* as a high class community of *Ativarnashramdharmis* (those above the *Varnashramadharm*a) is founding *Veershaivotkarshapradipika* and *Veerashaiva*ndachandrika. The superior status to *Varnashramadharma,* of *Ativarnashramadharm* as a socio-religious system is established.

In short, the *Varnashramadharm*a based on birth is iniquitous in so far as it excludes from it a large portion of the community from real religious life; it makes a difference between men and women in religious life; it takes different sacramental rites a close preserve of a particular section of the community. It, in brief shows that the community is merely a socio-political body. Thus Hinduism, if it is *Varnashramadharma,* can in no way include *Lingayathism* in it as a sub-religion. The *Lingayaths* are Hindus in the sense that they are descendents of the Hinduism and that they are not people coming from outside India like Parsies. They are Hindus as a race but not as a religion.

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They are a different religious entity, a distinct religious factor. In this particular aspect they are like Jains, who form a different religious sect. They violently were shattered away, discarding the Hindu religion and forming a separate religion of their own. But Jains differ from *Lingayaths* in one aspect and therefore they are safe in their claims as a different religious community, in respect of not owning their allegiance with the *Vedas* and not owning their faith in them. In this respect, *Lingayaths* differ from Jains, as they seem to respect the *Veda* though they do not own the *Vedas* as the basis of their religion. They profess and own the *Agamas* as they are the base and precursors of their religion. However, their respect for the *Vedas* has made confusion worse confounded and the position and status of the community very anomalous.

Hence idol-worship is a common feature in the religion of the Hindus. If religion can be so defined, *Lingayaths* are not Hindus in religion because they are not idol-worshippers. Only in one respect they are Hindus in religion, namely, in respect of worshipping one of the Hindu Gods, *Shiva*. But mere worship of a God is not religion; it should have philosophy and practice marking its differentia. And because *Lingayath* religion has its own philosophy and practice distinct in itself it cannot be a sub-religion of Hinduism.

After establishment of the religion, the Lingayath community became independent of Hinduism. Questions were raised regarding their status among the Hindus and their religion whatever it was, on account of the new community altogether serving its connection with the Brahmanic priest-hood. The followers of the new religion had to answer the question and ascertain themselves. They tried their best to maintain their positions. Besides, they claimed to be *Aprakrutbrahman*. They had no clear idea of their status as an independent religion. Moreover it seems that they must have thought it honorable not only to be *Brahmins* but Super-Brahamins, which they christened with the name of Aprakritabrahman.

The confusion regarding the status of Lingayathism within Hinduism could have been avoided if it was maintained that they were an independent religious fold without explaining it as *Ativarnashramadharma* or *Aprakritabrahmanadharma*. The explanation maintains the independent status indirectly but not directly. The confusion became much worse later, when support of the

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basic principles of the religion was sought from the *Vedic*, especially *Upnishadic* literature. *Lingadharanachandrika* was one such book. But if the creed, the tenets and principles of the religious are closely studied, it will be clear that the *Lingayathism* fundamentally differs from Hindu religion which eludes definition. The position of Jains and Sikhs is safe as both have thrown off their allegiance to the *Vedas*. All Jains are descendents of Hindus. So also many Sikhs are Hindus. But they have maintained their position clearly by asserting. Their distinctness of creed, tenets and principles. Anyway Lingayaths treated a sure and safe ground if they boldly maintain that Lingayathism is an independent religious entity, inspite of the confusion and dubiousness caused by the trend of discussion noted above regarding the status of *Lingayaths* and their religion *Veershaivanandachandrika* itself maintains in the following words the independent status of the religion.

Lingayathism is an independent religion (Mate Mahadevi 2006): There are some important questions which are raised regarding the status of Lingayathism such as; is the *Lingayath* religion an independent Religion? Or else is it a sect, caste or a group? Does it have features to consider it as independent? If it is independent Religion, and then what are the relations of it with Hindus? Human beings are also common animals who live with natural habits. Religion is the medium to control them by ethical rule. It is considered that some ethical rules and faith which regulate the life of the individuals and society constitites religion.

Religion must have some necessary constituents, such as 1) Religious Preceptor 2) Goal 3) Doctrine of vision 4) Consecration 5) Doctrine of society 6) Ethics 7) Doctrine of economics 8) Law 9) Culture 10) Ritual and 12) Literature.

On the basis of above points the defferences between other religions can be explained. By this view the *Lingayath* Religion is independent Religion because it has all differentiating aspects to be recognized as an independent religion.

Veerashaivism* and *Lingayathism

Present confusion about *Lingayathism* and *Veerashaivism* is so common that, it seems difficult to believe or guess that both are entirely different and both have indefinite differences. The fact concerned is not only with commons, it is indeed with various writers, scholars and

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dignified personalities. But the ethics, practices, evidences, logic and various other factors prove that *Lingayathism* and *Veerashaivism* are entirely different, and they are quite opposite to each other. Isn't it the thing of surprise? Yes it is true. To specify the dependence/independence of Lingayath religion over Veerashaiva, I feel it is very relevant to resolve the limitations. So now let us study evidences.

Madivala Machideva,We have Linga, We are called Lingavanthas, What can I say to these monkey like men, Repeat going towards worldly (Bhavi) idols of Shaiva, O' Lord Kalideva.

Sharana Madival Machideva a conteporary person to Guru Basaveshwara, who was doing Kayaka (work) of washer man at Kalyana, contributed very significant ethics to the bravest people who struggled and succeeded in the protection of Vachana literature from opponent communal forces during the revolution of Kalyana. He gave very important evidence through the above said Vachana. Leaning towards worldly (Bhavi) Idols of Shaiva is foolishness. Bhavi is the stage of the man without any religious consecration, not having any Samskaras of the religion, totally ignorant about the spiritual aspects. He place Shaiva Idols in to the state of Bhavi. Another important aspect is one who has Linga on his body he alone is considered as Lingayatha and not the one who is born as a Lingayath. He also gave the historical evidence for the name of the religion Lingavantha. We can notice one more thing in this Vachana that the Lingayath faith is being developed from Shaiva. Re adopting the old practice of Shaiva (that is idol worship) will disqualify from the religious followship.

Lingadharanachandrika is a treatise written to establish the principle of creed of wearing Linga on the body by the Veerashaivas or Lingayatas. It prominently explains the followers of Veerashaivism and signifies unmistakably those that wear on their body the holy Linga, that forms the most distinctive and distinguishable religious mark of the followers. The former is coeval with the origin of the religion, whenever it may have been: but it fails to express the distinguishing mark worn on the body by the followers of Veerashaivism. It dismisses them strikingly in contra-diction from all other Shaivas and Shaiva sects of India. The word "Veerashaiva" does not bring out the idea of Linga worn on the body as strikingly as the word "Lingayata" does. The former has been etymologically defined and elaborately explained in treatise and

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literature of the religion. But the origin of the word "Lingayata" is not only obscure but conspicuous by the absence of its explanation in religious literature, and is neither defined nor explained therein. Still it has the very enviable merit of making out the followers of the religion severally and collectively as a religious community.

55. *Namage lingavuntu, Navu Lingavantarendu nudivaru, Matte marali Bhavishaivadaivangaligerguva, E manga manavaranenembenayy,*

Kalidevayya. S V S 8 / 637

56. *M. R. Sahkhare, History and Philosophy of Lingayata religion. Page 1-10*

It is no wonder, therefore, that the term "Lingayata" should have been more common since some past time and long enough, and should express not only a member of the community but also the distinctive mark of the faith that makes the community a distinct religious entity. It connotes the most distinctive and characteristic feature of the religion, nay the very heart and soul of the religion, namely, the creed of wearing Linga on the body, and denotes that such are the followers of faith and such is the community, History and Philosophy of Lingayat Religion in short and distinguishes from other religious communities or sects of India. The term "Veerashaiva" is significant and looms large in religious tracts and literature to the total exclusion of "Lingayata" but is less common in ordinary language.

The word "Lingayata" has been spoken of derisively by a person, who makes no secret of his intentions, and has been slightingly compared to words like "Bagayata' (garden land) and the like. This is but mere mockery and impious and irrelevant language. Whatever and whenever may be the origin of the word, it is seen that it has attained the full religious and communal signification and significance. One may feel sorry that the word should be so mocked at and tossed about in the spirit of contempt and satire. It is palpably renegade like to do so. One may not like it but one cannot help the lolling tongue of scandal. But the word has not the misfortune of being left alone to be treated so slightingly. It had its stalwart defenders and exponents. A learned gentleman explained the word, in sharp report, grammatically and justified its significance and popularity. The word "Lingayata", he says, is a Sanskrit word. It is delivered, he explains, from the constituents, Linga and ayata or linga-Aa-yat.

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The above explanation is convincing and speaks about the scholarship of the gentleman and it cannot be taken exception to, except by petty-fogging spirits. All the same an explanation of this kind has not been found in treatises of the past times. The explanation has been original and given for the first time. And it may be accepted in authority hereafter, as it will attain confirmation and sanctity of age in due course. But so far as our knowledge of existing Sanskrit works of Veerashaiva religion are concerned. The learned gentle man is conscious of himself and admits that the explanation given above has been his own attempt to prove that the Sanskrit word is grammatically formed. He, therefore, remarks "After the word has been established in the foregoing to be a Sanskrit word grammatically formed, there remains no ground for any body to ask for its occurrence in books of past times, for the simple reason that its use at present is proof enough of its use in the past. Grammar and the explanation of the grammatical formation of a word is sufficient to prove, whether the word is Tatsama (loan-word), Tadbhava (modified-word), Deshya (original Kanarase or indigenous word), Annyaadesha (foreign word), or Gramya (Slang). Now that we have established the word to be Sanskrit word, the disputant cannot say that the word is not a Sanskrit word unless and until he successfully disproves it".

After stating the polemic about the word, we would like to give our opinion and explanation of the origin and growth of the word into its wide popular use. We think that the word is one of the conventional growth. It is based on the psychology of the people to have a word expressing an object, short, simple, and connotating the inner meaning of the object for which it stands. The people expect that the inner meaning of the object should flash forth and the object should throb into their minds as soon as the word expressing the object is uttered. The word "Veerashaiva" failed to satisfy such expectation of the people. It denotes, as it does now, simply some name of Shiva. But it did not connote in any way the prominent and the only characteristic, namely, the holy Linga worn on the body. Linga worn on the body is the visible sign and a distinctive mark of being a Veerashaiva. But the word "Veerashaiva" by itself does not and did not bring out the idea of the mark. Men had and have to pause and think before they comprehend the characteristic mark. But having no patience to do so, they are busy in

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finding out a new word, as a short cut, to understand the characteristic features of Linga, to they are not only less prominent but also common to other Shaivas, namely, Vibuti and Rudrakshi. But Linga is the only special mark of Veerashaiva. How Ling is to be expressed and understood easily? The method of solving the problem is simple. The possessive Sanskrit affix Katt is there. And the word Lingayat, like Bhagavat, Dhanvant, and a host of others, must have attained popularity in a very short time, as it expressed both the distinctive mark and the possessor of the mark. Dhanvant expresses the possessor of Dhan and conveys easily and prominently both the characteristic, namely, Dhan and its possessor. In the same way the concept Lingayat also conveys the same. As soon as it is uttered it conveys the distinctive mark and its wearer. Lingavan is the nominative singular of Lingavant the uninflected form Pratipadak, and expresses a single individual wearing Linga; and Lingavantaha is the nominative plural of Lingavant and expresses many individuals wearing Linga or the whole host of Linga-wearers or the members of the Lingayatha community. It is very common and customary to use plural as a mark of honour, when a single individual is addressed or spoken. The use of plural with reference to a single individual includes courteous refined manners. Hence Lingavanta must have been more common than the singular Lingavan, as it is civil and respectful when used with reference to a single individual but it is necessary, when used with reference to many or the whole community. The Sanskrit words Lingavan and Lingavanth must have been first used by the few, educated in Sanskrit, but in course of a very short time it must have come to be used by the ordinary folk and attained relevance in the general public, on account of its connotive merit. The language of the ordinary folk being Kannada, Lingavan and Lingavantha, and more probably the latter, must have assumed the form of Lingayat, a Tadbhav word, a class of words of the Kannada language. The word Lingayat thus seems to be a word of conventional growth. This is our explanation, though we cannot quote an authority any explanation given in books of past times. We are responsible for it, whatever may be the truth in it and whatever may be the merits or demerits in it, though it seems to be the truth. And we may repeat the words of the learned gentleman, mutatis mutandis. "After the word is established as forgoing to be a word of conventional growth as a Tadbhav word, there is no ground for any body

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to ask for its occurrence in books of past times, for the simple reasons that its use at present is proof enough of its use in the past. Explanation of a word, as being a word of conventional growth, is sufficient to prove that it is a Tadbhav word conventionally derived from a Sanskrit word. The disputant cannot now say that it is not so, unless and until he successfully disproves it".

There is another reason why the word "Lingayata" is to be used in preference to the word "Veerashaiva". The words Lingayata and Veerashaiva are neither coextensive nor convertible, though they look so. In a way "Veerashaiva" is more extensive and genus, the word "Lingayata" is less extensive and species. The former is more extensive and a genus, because it includes within its fold the Aaradhyas, who form a class or community, a small community mostly found in Telgu districts. "Lingayata" is a species and less extensive, because it does not include within its fold the Aaradhyas who call themselves Veerashaivas and not Lingayaths. They are a small sect of sub sect of Veerashaiva and not they do not profess and practice Shatsthala and Ashtavarana, the creed of Veerashaivism or Lingayathism, and profess and practice in addition to Varnashramadharma of Hindus and Hinduism. They wear on their bodies Linga and also the sacred thread. They retain some of the Brahminical sixteen Samskaras like Punsvan, Simantonnayan and others, which are tabooed from the Veerashaiva creed.

In short, if the real religion, the real Veerashaiva religion, is to be understood, it comes to be understood as Shaktivishisthadwait, Shatsthala, and Ashtavarana and neither more nor less. And this aspect of the religion and the whole aspect including the Panchacharas (five fold code of Life) and Trishashtisheelas (thirty three rules of daily conduct) is better expressed and unfolded by 'Lingayathism' and the follower is better expressed by 'Lingayata'. It is to be understood that whenever the word Veerashaiva and Veerashaivism, and Lingayata and Lingayathism, are used in these pages, they are used as coextensive and convertible terms as exclusive of Aradhyas.

Shaivism and Veerashaivism

Veerashaiva is from other Shaivas-and Veerashaivism is a division or subdivision of Shaivism. Veerashaivas form a section of the Shaiva sectors and Veerashaivism form a species of Shaivism, though an

integral and distinct part of it, the word Veer prefixed to 'Shaiva', makes the whole distinction, and is intended for making the whole distinction and is elaborately explained in various ways. That makes Veerashaism a distinct religious entity. The concept that Veerashaivism is a distinct religious entity and the Lingayata community is a distinct religious community will be vindicated and proved later, so that Veerashaivism deserves to be counted and mentioned along with other major religions of the world. It will sufficient here to state the relation between Shaivism and Veerashaivism to show that Veerashaivism is grown out of Shaivism and made itself so though unfortunately, Veerashaivism or the religion of the Lingayata is the least known religion, for reasons that will be noted further in a relevant section.

Shaiva and Veerashaivas have something in common but differ so widely in other vital matters. They stand on a different level altogether and some thing common comes to be obscured largely. Thus Shaivism is the background of Veerashaivism that forms the open entity, the thing, common to both Shaiva and Veerashaivas is the God head or Upasyadevata. Moreover the idea of the deity at the bottom of the universe created protected and reabsorbed by the deity, the idea of deity as the cosmic principle and spirit, evolving the Universe, involving the universe into itself and transcending over the Universe, is the common ground on which both Shaivism and Veerashaivism stand. Here ends the common ground, though there are some other things common to both like Vibhuti, Rudraksh, and Mantra. But these also differ in their relation to other things in the system of their religious practices. In short the deity and the broad philosophical interpretation of the worshipping of the deity in cosmogony and the re absorption of the Universe into the deity is what forms the common principle and common ground of the meeting of the two. In other aspect of the methods of attaining final (the whole called the religious practice), in respect of spiritual practices for the culture of individuals, in respect social practice they differ so widely that they bifurcate and stand on a different level. However there can be no gain saying the fact that Veerashaivism has grown out of Shaivism. And to understand how Veerashaivism has evolved or grown out of Shaivism, historical study its growth and development in the proper perspective, and to understand the scripture and religious literature common to both and peculiar to both, it is indispensable to study and

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trace the growth of Shaivism historically. To this, therefore, we now turn; because this is as much necessary, as it is to understand the foreground equally well.

Founder of Lingayathism

In the contemporary time Scholars like M. Chadand Murthy (2006) and Sri Madh Rambhapuri Jagdguru express their scepticism regarding the founder of *Lingayathism*. They argue that Basaveshwara is not the founder of *Lingayathism*. They argue that there is nothing that is new in *Lingayathism* and its ethics. The equality, *Kayaka* and the worship of Lord Shiva in the form of *Linga* all are having their bases in *Sanatana* Dharma of Hinduism. Hence, they argue Basaveshwara did not found any religion and in fact *Lingayathism* is only an offshoot of Hinduism.

The arguments of above scholars are only half true. *Lingayathism* has drawn substantially from the existing *Sanatana* Dharma of Hinduism. But it also has radically differed from Hinduism, in terms of giving optimum stress on the practice of the ethical principles and the social ideas.

Confusion regarding the founder of Lingayath religion became so strong that the majority of the society and even the Lingayaths are in a dilemma regarding Guru Basaveshwara as its founder because they are unaware of the ethics, history, practices of Lingayath religion. It is very important to know about the founder. But unfortunately same is being neglected, misguided and misled preachers, as well as prjudiced minded persons who intend to grow personally on the name of religious organization(misuse of vote bank in their favour), and narrow minded communal powers. The Lingayath religion has two enemies one is external enemy. Another and powerful one is internal enemy. Jealousy against Guru Basava is being developed by some priests. As their ancient forefathers preached the Dharma, Guru Basaveshwara headed that and got name and fame. Panchacharis donot importance to Basaveshwara.

Basic concepts of the Lingayath religion to strengthen and propagate have turned back to harm same religion. Hiremallur K. Ishwaran in his book Lingayatha Dharma: Ondu Adhyayana: furnishes the information "At the time of Basaveshwara *Jangama* was one who did his duty of *Jangama* willingly and became so. But at present *Jangama* is one who takes birth in *Jangama* caste. Shivayoga Mandira

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has played major role in dividing *Jangama* by giving education to *Jangamas* by birth.

Hazardous situation is created relating to the founder of the Lingayath religion. Prof: V. V. Sangamad discusses the problem regarding the founder of Lingayath religion. He is of the opinion that. This is the cause to divide society into Guru-Virakta and Bhakta-Jangama.

All the divisions have become obstacles for unity and development. Without solving this there is no future for Lingayath society. The society is facing severe problems in ethics, religious, social, education, cultural, economical and political fields. And it has lost position at national level. The community has spread over south India Karnataka, in Maharastra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala. In North Jain religion has spread over Gujrat and Rajasthan, Sihkism in Panjab, Bouddhas are found in Uttar Pradesh. By the view of nationality these religions are smaller than Lingayath and have spread only in particular states. They are more highlighted at national level than the Lingayath which is followed merely by the people of southern India. According to the ethics and history, Lingayath religion is superior to the other religions. Its status at international level is nothing but dream!

Founded in 12th century it was national level religion. It lost national level existence in 19-20th century due to conspiracy family priest (purohits). Survival of Lingayath religion and community is the question of Lingayaths only. For the sake of humanity, Lingayaths must develop broad mindedness. Kayaka, Dasoha, castelessness are the three objects of this religion. There is no

57. *Hiremallur K. Ishwaran. Lingayatha Dharma : Ondu Adhyayana * Page 161, **165*

58. *V. V. Sangamad. Basavannanavru Lingayath Dharma Samsthapakaru (Basavanna the founder of Lingayath religion), Page 1.*

future for the religion if the three tenets are not brought in to practice by every one of the society. This religion contains world wide theme of all Yogas and all Darshans. that's why it is to be practiced worldwide. The aim of world wide propagation is being hindered due to lack of unity among Lingayaths.

Some powers of religions, social, political writers are arguing that this (controversy of founder) is not related to religion. This problem should not come in the way of the progress of the religion.

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Generally the religion is known after the name of its founder or its major ethics. So in Lingayath religion also we find joint venture of foundation of Lingayath religion and invention of the Istalinga. The Istalinga is the central point of the ethics, celebrity, worship, identity. Name of the religion, practices, and medium to practice equality, emancipation of women, universal fraternity, symptom of the Lingayath religion and each every aspect is related to Lingayaths. As Lingayath religion starts with the Istalinga Deeksha religious consecration) Linga + Ayata. It will conclude with Istalinga at death by name Lingaikya (one ness with God). So it plays a very significant role to define/decide both. Founder of Istalinga is nothing but founder of the Lingayath religion.

Clarification through Vachana literature

Guru Basaveshwara is the inventor of Guru, Linga, Jangama, Prasada Etc Madival Maachideva "Basavanna is reason for Guru, Basavanna is reason for Linga, Basavanna is reason for Jangama, Basavanna is reason for Prsada, Basavanna is reason for seven worlds, Basavanna is reason for Lord Kalideva, Madivala Machideva was the conyemporary Sharana of the Guru Basaveshwara. In the above Vachana he specifies Basaveshwara invented Guru (preceptor), Linga, Jangama (Priest), Prasada (Grace of God, holy food, Phala/return for the good deed) and even seven worlds.

In another Vachana Madivala Machideva witnessed the historical truth in a beautiful manner along with other essential aspects. " wherever we see we find Basava as creeper, If seen it near by find bunch of Linga, If squeezed find juice of devotion, Basava is behind adoption (Ayata), realizations (Swayata) and understating (Sannihita), Basava is behind formation of guru, Linga, Jangama, Padodaka, and Prasada, You may enquire here, you may enquire there, Devotion without chanting Basava is nothing but nil, O Lord Kalideva.

59. *Basavanna madalikke guruvayittu, Basavanna madalikke Lingavayittu, Baavanna madalikke Jangamavayittu, Basavanna madalikke Prasadavayittu, Basavanna madalikke erelulokavayittu, Basavannanindada Kalidevayya. SVS 8/682, V No 245*

60. *Ettate nodiadattatta Basavanemba balli, Etti nodidade Lingavemba gonchalu, Vatti hindidade Bhaktiembarasavayya, Aayatavu Basavannaninda, Swayat Basavannaninda, Sannihitavu Basavannaninda, Guru Basavannaninda, Linga Basavannaninda,*

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Jangama Basavannaninda, Padodaka Basavannaninda, Prasada Basavannaninda, Atta ballade nivu kelire, etta ballade nivu kelire, Basava Basava Basava endu, majjankkereyadavana bhakti, Shunya kana Kalidevaradeva S V S 8/526, No89

"Guru Basaveshwara is the founder of lingayath religion by inventing Istalinga; Chenna Basavanna. "There is a saying that Basaveshwara is beginner (Aadi), Linga existing from eternity (Anadi), Linga is beginner (Aadi), Basavanna is senior to Linga (Anadi), Linga is born in the stomach of Basavanna, Jangama is born in the stomach of Basavanna, Prasada is born in the stomach of Basavanna, I came to notice, Basavanna is the only cause for this three fold ethics, O Lord Koodalachennasangamadeva.

Like wise a number of Vachanas written by a number of Sharana/Sharanes confirm and he is the founder of the Lingayath religion. The truth that the inventor of Istalinga is Guru Basaveshwara.

Now let us see the evidence belonging to the time, after the life span of Basaveshwara. Following historical evidences clarify that Lingayath Religion is found by Guru Basaveshwara.

Poet Harihara (Hampe)1195A.D

Palkurike Somnath (1200 A.D., in the Telgu language)

Chamarasa-Prabhulinga Leele (1400)

Mayidevaprabhu (Magge)[1430]

Chaturmukha Bommarasa [1500 A.D]

Gubbiya Mallanaraya-Gururja Charite [1650 A. D]

Maritontadarya [1560 A. D]

Virupaksh Pandit- Channabasava Purana [1585 A. D]

Lakkanna Dandesh-Shivatatva Chintamani[1428A.D]

Gururaj [15th Century](Sanskrit language)

Maritontdarya[16th Century] (Sanskrit language)

Keladi's Basavaraj (Sanskrit language)

Hiremalluru Eshwaran clearly denied that there was Lingayathism before Guru Basaveshwara. Prof: V. V. Sangamad in his book Basavannanavaru Lingayath Dharma Samsthapakaru (Basavanna the founder of Lingayath religion) states that eminent persons belonging to

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the present time endorse the view that Basaveshwara is the founder of Lingayath religion.

1) Dr. Pavate Sidramappa,

2) Sri Hardekar Manjappa,

61. *Aadi Basavanna, anaadi Lingavendembaru, Husi, husi E nudiaya kelalagadu, Aadi Linga, anadi Basavannanu, Lingavu Basavannana udardalli huttitu, Jangamau Basavannana udaradalli huttitu, Prasadavu Basavannananu anukarisalayittu, Inti trividhakke Basavannane karanavendaridenayya, Koodalachenna Sangamadeva.. SVS 3/ VNo5*

62. *S. Munavalli. "The Veerashiava Religion its practices and principles", Page 36,*

63. *Hiremalluru Eshwaran "Lingayath Dharma; Ondu Adhyana", Page 85.*

64. *V.V.Sangamad. Basavannanavaru Lingayath Dharma Samsthapakaru (Basavanna the founder of Lingayath religion) Page21,*

1) Sri Uttangi Channappa,

2) Sri Halepete Chinatmani,

3) Sri M. R. Srinivasmurty,

4) Sri A. N. Krishna Rao,

5) Sri R. R. Divakar, Patil Puttappa,

6) Dr. Siddayya Puranik,

7) Dr. D. Javaregouda,

8) Sri G. M. Patil Rtd Library officer Dharwad University and etc.

Existence of Lingayath religion was not at all found in any part of India and in literature of any language before 12th century. We can find such evidences in and after 12Th century only. So there is no any other way then to arouse Guru Basaveshwara is the founder of Lingayath religion and its literature.

Dr. P. B. Desai in his book "Basaveshwara and his times" concluded by the study of various sources like stone scriptures, Puranas, Kavya, Vachana literature that Basaveshwara is the founder of Lingayath religion.

In the book 'Yuga Yatr Bharatiya Samskriti' Published of University of Mysore also confirms that Basaveshwara is founder of Lingayath religion.

Dr. H. Tipperudraswami, Dr.M.Chidanadmurty, and Shri Shanatarasa and others cannot say who is the founder of Lingayathism clearly. Before Basava Jedar Dasimayya, Kondaguli Kesiraja etc., had

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proponed the beginning of the religion.

However we will find some writers intend to specify Guru Basaveshwara did not found any religion. They are of the opinion that Basaveshwara brought some reformation in Lingayathism.

On pursuing the situation, Guru Basaveshwara encouraged a marriage between Brahmin bride and an untouchable bridegroom. He crossed the caste barrier of Verna. At the enquiry of Kings Court contending parties were questioned who permitted them to cross the caste barrier?

We can catch a very important point in this event. If they were followers of the caste system, then what was reason (why they dare to) undergo into inter caste marriage, And how one can accept that Guru Basaveshwara abide the same existing religion and how he insisted a new religion. By this we can decide that the new faith of Guru Basaveshwara came into existence as counter action against the Hindu casteism. The new faith incepted by Guru Basaveshwara is nothing but Lingayath religion.

For instance the principle of *Kayaka* which is used to cut the social and economical inequalities is a very significant contribution of *Lingayathism*; along with this there are specific unique practices that were introduced by Basaveshwara into *Lingayathism* such as *Panchachara*, *Astavarana*, *Shatasthala*, *Anubhava Mantapa*, which established independent status of *Lingayathism*. This use of the forgotten doctrines in vibrant way and innovation of new and unique practices which caused the origin of new socio religious movement called *Lingayathism* proves the status Basaveshwara as the founder of a new unique and independent religion called *Lingayathism*.

Life and times of Basaveshwara

65. *Ibid Page 18*
66. *Ibid Page 20*
67. *Ibid Page no 2*
68. *Taralabalu Jagadguru Sri Shivakumar Shivacharya. "Vachanas of Basavanna" (collection of Vachanas Basaveshwara rendereded to English), Page 15-19,*

Basaveshwara was the only son of Madarasa and Madalambika a distinguished and devout Shaiva couple of Bagewadi, a small town near

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modern Bijapur in Karnataka State (South India). He was born during the beginning of the twelfth century A. D. and lived, perhaps till the end of that century (Shivakumar, 1967:15-19).

His parents were ardent followers of the Vedic religion. They had their own way of worship, beliefs and traditions. But Basavanna even while he was a young boy, somehow, developed as aversion for the Brahminical rites which involved the sacrifice of animals. Divisions of the society into several classes on the basis of the birth of an individual did not convince him. He was very unhappy to see that the only so called superior class had the right to perform certain rites and not others. So, he left his parents and his relations out of sheer disgust even while he was in his teens. He went to a Shaiva teacher at Kudala Sangama a sacred place where two big rivers Krishna and Malaprabha meet each other. The philosophy of the Shaiva saint must have been of a progressive nature so as to catch the imagination of this blooming genius.

Basaveshwara was invited to serve in the Court of king Bijjala. He accepted the invitation. Bijjala, a Kalachuri Prince was ruling the Thrdewadi province from Mangalawada at that time. Baladeva Dannayaka one of the ministers of Bijjala, got his daughter Gangambika wedded to him. Gangambika proved a worthy wife to Basavanna in all respects.

By his selfless service, honesty and integrity, Basavanna won the admiration of the King Bijjala. In due course he became the custodian of the King's treasury. A few years later, Bijjala began to rule from Kalyana after overthrowing the Chaluklya emperor. Basavanna also went over to Kalyana and continued as a minister under Bijjala.

Basaveshwara invented Lingayathism based on freethinking, universal fraternity, equality, and all round developing ethics. He started to propagate the Lingayath religion from Kalyana.

Kalyana, a famous historical city situated in modern Bidar District of Karnataka State is witness of Lingayath movement under the dynamic leadership of Basavanna. A great social and religious reformer as he was set to work with unflinching zeal to eradicating the social and religion inequity in Hindu society at that time. He preached that all men are brothers, bad conduct is low caste, food conducts is high caste and religion is the birthright of every body. These doctrines of liberty, equality and brotherhood were quite new to common man of the land.

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It was a great boon to them, particularly women who were thrown in to the dark corner. This is the first prophet perhaps, to extol the dignity of manual labor, since he advocated the equality of all professions. These factors, beside his official position, charity, piety and learning made his new creed very popular.

The movement became well-known throughout the length and breadth of Karnataka and even beyond. There was ready and hearty response from every nook and corner of the country. Spiritual aspirants from different parts of the country who came under the influence of his profound teachings, clustered around him.

Allama Prabhu, Channabasavanna, Akkamahadevi, Akkanagamma, Moligeya Maraih and a host of others, both men and women coming from various strata of the society worked with him. It is this great galaxy that made the city of Kalyana memorable in the history of Karnataka and created the ever Anubhava Mantapa a congregation of the great saints and mystics. Shunya *Shimhasana*, the sacred seat of the Holy order was established in the Mantapa.

Anubhava Mantapa, the temple of religious experience was not built of stones bricks and mortar. The Shunya Simhasana which Allama is said to have adored is not made of precious metals, pearls or stones. It was a conflagration of the highest spiritual wisdom and a centre of divine awareness which could serve as spiritual illumination for all time to come.

Hundreds of saints, both men and women contributed their intuitive experience to the Anubhava Mantapa the fountain of divine experience. They gave utterance to their spiritual experiences which were so original and unique that they were reduced to writing in simple and chaste Kannada. These writings in the style of poetic prose come to be called as Vachana. Till then, no prophet tried to teach in Kannada language of the people of Karnataka. Vachanas, as they were in simple and guanine Kannada made an unprecedented influence on Kannadigas. They enraptured the hearts of thousands of Kannadigas and the movement became very popular and powerful in a very short time. Nobody, not even Bijjala, the monarch at that time could not control this powerful movement.

Bijjala who had overthrown the Chalukyan ruler and usurped his throne feared that he may suffer the same fate at the hands of

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Basavanna and his followers. This fear was baseless. But some people who were highly orthodox and others who were aspiring for power fanned the fire of misunderstanding beholden Basavanna and the king. One significant event which was ahead of the time, provided them an opportunity. The celebration of the marriage of the son of an 'untouchable' named Haralayya with the daughter of Madhuvayya s Brahmin! This shook the very foundation of the caste system and was too much to the orthodoxy to tolerate. They pleaded before the King that the marriage, unholy and irreligious, was performed at the instance of Basavanna, and goaded him to punish the so called heretics. Of course, both Haralayya and Madhuvayya had been Lingayats. The marriage was just in accordance with the new faith preached by Basavanna who was very highly pleased with it.

Bijjala who was perhaps jealous of the popularity of Basavanna wanted to win the favor of the Orthodoxy and some disgruntled officers who had joined them. He ordered the eyes of the contracting parties to be removed. Basaveshwara interference was of no avail. It is said that the 'criminals were finally executed.

Basaveshwara's gentle heart was filled with grief and remorse. He quietly left Kalyana at once with his followers for Kudala Sangama, wherefrom Basavanna emerged as a great teacher, greeted him with open arms. Probably, one or two years after his return to Kudala Sangama he sought union with the Supreme.

Essential features of Lingayathism

Given the above discussion on the confusion regarding *Lingayathism* and *Veerashaivism,* the founder of *Lingayathism* let us turn our attention to the essential features of *Lingayathism* such as *Shaktivishishtadvaita, Astavarana, Panchachara, Shatasthala, Istalinga, Kayaka and Anubhava Mantapa* one by one.

Shaktivishishtadvaita

Religion may be defined as a system of belief in the superhuman power, which governs the course of the universe and the human life in it, and it is entitled to some form of worship from the human beings for attaining eternal happiness. The system of belief connotes doctrines concerning the relations of the universe Man and God, the superhuman Power, and explains how God, as the Almighty Power, creates, sustains,

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and destroys or reabsorbs the Universe. They also explain and lay down the procedure and methods of worshipping God for the human beings so that they may be free from the trammels of the worldly life and attain eternal happiness by the grace of God. Thus a religion has two parts (1) the philosophy and (2) the practice. The former explains the work of God with the universe and the latter the way of attaining the grace of God for the liberation and final beatitude. The practice of a religion is based on the philosophy of the religion. Such is the idea of religion for all practical purpose, however functionery it may be. The Lingayat religion has both parts in it distinct to itself and can, therefore, claim to be a distinct religion.

The philosophy of *Lingayat*hism is monotheism and is called *Shaktivishishtadvaita*. (Sakhare, 2004:433) It is, adopted from and improved upon *Kashmere Shaivasiddhanata*. Though adopted from the *Kashmere* school of *Shaivism* it is given the distinct name of "*Shaktivishistadvaita*" to give prominence to *Shakti*, the power or Energy of the Lord, *Parama Shiva*(the *Parabrahman*), living in intimate union with him. The intimate union or oneness of *Shiva* and His *Shakti*, as we have already stated, is beautifully expressed by Kalidas in the words. *Shakti Parmeshwar* as intimately one as the words and their senses. Words, divested of their sense, are mere babbles and there can be no word without sense: similarly *Shiva* and *Shakti* cannot be separated from each other; they are inseparable ones. The attributes of Para Brahman, according to *Veda*nta, are *Sat, Chit* and *Ananda*: These are the only three positive qualities that are attributed to Brahman, which can be spoken of in no other positive terms but only in the negative terms as " *Naiti Naiti*" (not this, not that etc.)According to *Shaktivishistadvaita* these three positive qualities of *Parabrahman (Parashiva)* are well expressed in terms of the Lord's self-consciousness As "Aashmi, Prakashe, Nandami" i.e., the Lord is conscious of His being, Shining, and enjoying independently of anything else. Hence he is *Swatantra* and his *Shakti*, in the form of His self-consciousness, is a part and parcel of His Self. *Shiva* is the supreme entity. He is the all-knowing, all-doing, all-sustaining being called *Prakasha*, the serene Lord, all-pervading indivisible and infinite. He, as the underlying reality in everything, is all-transcending. That is to say, His nature is primarily a twofold aspect-an immanent aspect in which he pervades the universe,

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and a transcendental aspect in which He is beyond all universal manifestations. He is the origin and source of the universe and is the *Parabrahman*, as the *Veda*ntis are pleased to call him. He is *Vimarsharupa*, i.e. he is Self-conscious. The vibration of the perfect egoity is His *Shakti* and through her He holds and visualizes the entire universe of objects as "this is the *Vimarsh*, the Perfect Egoity, is the *Shakti*.

The *Pariahs* of *Paramashiva* is the substratum of His psychic images, the result of His reflection, which are merely its modes or forms. Images, psychic or physical, are due to a stimulus received either from external factors or the revived residual traces, as when one imagines of dreams. The mirror is also a substratum of images. But the images reflected in it are merely the effect of external objects that receive light from some other source and not from the mirror itself. A self-luminous jewel shines on some external object and has its image reflected in it. But neither the mirror nor the jewel is conscious either of itself or of the object reflected in itself. Hence the nature of a mirror or a jewel is altogether different from the nature of the Lord's *Prakasha*. All the three can be the substratum of images. The mirror is not self-luminous and, therefore, can not receive the image of an external object in darkness. A jewel is self-luminous but it is not conscious of its capability of receiving images, while the Lord is not only self-luminous but is conscious of His self-luminosity. The mirror and the jewel are, thus, *Jada* or intangible. But the Lord is all intelligent.

1) The *Parabrahman* is *Prakasharupa* 2) He has self-consciousness (*Atmavimarsha, Vimarsha*, or *Paramarsh*a). 3) this *Vimarsha* is His *Shakti* 4) And i*ccha*, jnana, *kriya* are the modes of aspects of that *Vimarsha*. The consciousness of the self-luminosity is also called *Prasavi* or *Chaitanya* or merely Chit *Prakash.* This form is the most distinctive aspect of Shiva. There is another difference between the mirror and the jewel and the Lord's *Prakasha*. The former receives images from objects that are external to them. But the Lord being all-inclusive there is nothing external to Him. It is the *Vimarsha* or consciousness of perfect egoity that gives rise to the images, which are, therefore, essentially the same (*samarasyatmaka*) as their substratum, the *Prakasha*. An individual soul has residual traces (*samskara*) of objects external to it and revives those traces. It can also imagine things and can build some grand object by imagining. The Lord, the Universal Consciousness or

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Self-can similarly imagine or manifest ideally the world of the Universe, just as a *Yogin* creates something and holds it up before the on-looking spectators, which they feel as real as the material world. Thus the world or the universe is the Lord's ideal manifestation or the result of Lord's *Prakasha- Vimarsha*, i.e., the Lord's imagination or reflection or thinking. It is evident that this reflection or idea of the Lord is different from the reflection on a mirror or a jewel. The Lord's reflection is the ideal creation or imagination, just as an individual self's imagination of an object; but the reflection of mirror or a jewel is merely material or physical representation of a thing in the mirror or the jewel. The upshot is that *Shaiva* is *Prakasha* and is conscious of His *Prakasha*, which, therefore, is used for that aspect of Shiva which serves as a substratum for all that is manifested ideally, exactly as the *Buddhi d*oes for the images that an individual builds at the tome of imagination. And *Vimarsh*a stands for that aspect, which is simply a power that may be called consciousness (for want of a better word), a power, which gives rise to self-consciousness, will, knowledge, and action (*Iccha, Jnana, Kriya*) in succession and is responsible for selection from what is already within and manifestation of the universe from the material selected at will, as apparently separate from itself. The Lord's self-consciousness, the power of will, knowledge and action may be said to be different aspects of this very *Vimasrsha*. The creation of the universe, therefore, is nothing but an ideal projection of psychic reflection or manifestation. The philosophy of the universe or creation is generally named Realistic Idealism.

The power of Shiva is a assort of reflex relation of self-identity and is never dissociated from him. *Shakti* is unalienated conscious nature of Shiva with all the contents un-manifested. She is, therefore, the divine nature that supplies the ground of Shiva's realization of His own Self. She is illumination independent of all other than its own self, which is but the power of limiting the all-transcending Shiva. Shiva of unsurpassed blissful joy is the enjoyer, and desire and such other contents of His self are His enjoyable. And it is for this reason that He assumes the form of *Shakti*, Hence the whole world of diverse names and forms exists as real only when it has its roots deeply struck in the nature of Shiva, the Supreme Being, and is, therefore, nothing other than the externalization of Self-conscious Shiva as the object of His own enjoyment. *Shakti* in short is *Atmavimarsh* or *Prakashvimarsh* and

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worked wonders in obedience to Shiva's will, which again is nothing but a phase or mode of His power. She possesses the common nature of Shiva and is styled of the lawfully wedded wife of Shiva acting in perfect accord with her husband's disposition or will. *Vimarsha* or the vibrating power of *Prakash* is *Svatantra* because its existence does not depend on anything else as does will, knowledge and action, each of which depends for its existence upon what immediately precedes. This representation the principal power of the Highest Lord, *Maheshwara,* as the Self is often so called. This includes all other powers which are attributed to the Ultimate *Parashiva* or *Parabrahman*. The Universal Consciousness is given different names from different points of view. It is called *Chaitanya* because it is conscious of itself and acts for uniting, separating, and dealing in multifarious ways with what is within, it is called *Spanda* because it vibrates and represents the essential nature of the Universal Consciousness of *ParmaShiva*, which is responsible for the apparent change from the state of absolute unity. It is also, called *Mahasatta* because it is the cause of *Ashraya* (substratum) of all that is said to exist in any form. *Parvak* or *parnad* is another name because is represents the speech in its most subtle form. In short *Prakasha* stands not only for the common substratum of all manifestables and the manifested but also fir the manifestables and the manifested themselves. Therefore when the Ultimate Principle, Shiva, is spoken of as *Prakasha-Vimarshaya* it means that the Ultimate in its aspect of *Prakasha* is both the Universe in either the manifested of the or un-manifested state and its permanent substratum; and that in its aspect as *Vimarsha* it is that power, which is ultimately responsible fro keeping the universe in the state of perfect identity with itself, as at the time of *Mahaprlaya*, and for manifesting it as apparently separate from itself, as at the time of creation.

Vimarsha or the power of Shiva resides in Him, as stated before, in a sort of reflex relation of identity. Power without the wielder of the powers is unimaginable; and there must be some kind of relation between them. The relation of Shiva and His *Shakti* is technically called *Samvaya, Samavaya* means a relation by virtue of which two different things like a substance and an attitude residing on that substance, substance and *Karma*, substance and cause and effect, atoms and particularity appear so unified as to represent one whole. It is, in other words, an inseparable union of essential identity and points to a reality

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that continues to remain in the character of an undivided organic whole. The two things forming one whole are never joined together. But the idea of separateness exists in human mind only, when one concentrate's analytic though on the compact invisible whole and tries to separate the content from the unified whole by predicating some definite character to it. It is clear from this that Shiva and *Shakti* are one indivisible whole. The Lingayath Philosophers gives a special name *"Samarasya"* to this intimate union. *Samarasya* means essential identity and is different from *Tadatmya.*

The philosophy of Lingayathism is so far the same as the *Kashmere Shivadvaita*. But *Kashmere* philosophers have not given any special name to their *Advaitism*; but the Lingayaths call it *Shaktivishishtadvaita* to give prominence to the wonder-working power of Shiva. However *Shakt*i is not as prominent as in *Shaktism,* where Shiva is so negligible without *Shakti* that Shiva becomes a kind of immovable (*Jadavastu*) without the *Shakti*. But according to Lingayath religion *Shakti* is Shiva's obedient hand maid executing the commands of her Lord. She is in a perfectly harmonious relation with Shiva, the ultimate Reality. Hence Shiva is characterized and distinguished by his power or capacity to work, which is only a phase of His *Prakash* in the form of *Vimarsha*. This is *Shaktivishishtadvaita*. The *Kashmere* Philosophers imply the *Shaktivishistatva* of Shiva but do not express it in so many words. While the Lingayaths express it by naming their *Advaita "Shaktivishishtadvaita"*. This is the first point of difference between the two Schools, which is only a difference in terminology and also an improvement in Lingayath philosophy. Hence *Vishishtatva* (Speciality) does not imply any inseparable union of two or more substances like, Brahman, Jiva, *Achit* of the *Ramanuja* system of South Indian *Shaivism*, as maintained by *Shakti. Vishisthatva* simply stresses the nature of chit of *Prakash* that can note the power to work wonders.

There is another reason why the essential identity (Samarasya) of Shiva and *Shakti* is stressed and termed *Shaktivishishtadvaita*. The reason is that Lingayath philosophers like the *Kashmere*ans do not agree with and approve of *Kaivaldvaita* of *Shankaracharya*, the preacher of *Mayavada*, the theory of illusion. Like the *Kashmere* philosophers the Lingayaths hold that the Lord's creation is real and not illusion. They reject *Mayavada* and prove that creation is the result of *Shaiva's*

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wonder-working power that is capable of doing things which are impossible for any other agency to do. The capability of the Lord is, therefore, said to be *Aghatanghatnatiayasi.* The *Mayavada* of *Shankaracharya* is demolished and *Shaktivishishtadvaita* is established.

There are two great defects in Shankaracharya's *Mayavada*, which admits *Maya* as the *Shakti* of *Brahman*. There is no explanation of the origin and abode of *Maya* The second defect is that the relation of Maya as the *Shakti* of Brahman is not well explained. Hence *Adhara* (substratum) of Maya is not clear. The two weak points of *Mayavada* are criticized and the theory stands refuted, *Shaktivishishtadvaita* explains the connection of Maya, the meaning of which is not *Avidhya* but something else as will be noted presently, with the Brahman in the way noted hitherto.

The extracts (given above), containing a succinct refutation of *Mayavada*, will speak for and justify themselves. They briefly state and reject the theory of Maya of Shankara; Maya is there in the system of Lingayath Philosophy as the sixth of 36th principles or *Tatvas*, which is not the 36 principles. But the first six principles, as maintained by the South Indian School of *Shaivism* differ in their sense and functions from those of *Kashmere* School and the Lingayath school of *Shaktivishishtadvaita*. It is also not possible for us to note fully the explanation of the *Tatvas* by the different schools. But it may be said that the South Indian *Shivadvaita* is similar to the *Vishistadvaita* of *Ramanuja*. But the *Kashmere* and Lingayath Schools differ from both *Ramanuja's* and *Shankara's* doctrines.

Shaktivishishtadvaita is *Nirvisheshadvaita,* for simple reasons that there is no *Vishesh* as maintained by *Ramanuja.* At the same time he means to claim *Shaktivishishtadvaita* to be real *Nirvisheshadvaita* rather than that of *Shankaracharya's Kaivaladvaita* which, he means, is not true, being defective and objectionable.

Amayayiyam Eshatvam i.e., the Lordship of the universe not rise to by Maya of *Ajnana* (ignorance) rejects the *Mayavada*, in which Brahman is the Lord of the universe brought into existence by Maya as its material cause. In the school of *Kevaldvaita* Brahman, the Supreme Reality is a mere "surrendered abstraction" sitting apart from the phenomenal universe. The conception of Brahman, the changeless unconditioned

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reality (*Kutastha)* is tantamount to some inert principle like the *Shankya Purusha." Nirvishesh'* rejects the *Vishistadvaita* of *Ramanuja* (and for that matter that of the *Shrikantha* School) in as much as in this school the *parabrahman* has the *Vishesha* in the form of *Chitt* (Jiva) and *Achitt (jada*). These two *Chitt* and *Achitt* are separate entities quite distinct from the Brahman though in intimate union with it.

There is perfect agreement between the schools of *Kashmere* and the Lingayaths. But the Lingayaths strike a new path different from that of *Kashmere* School. And the difference lies in the explanation of the sixth principle; Maya, Maya according to the *Kashmere* School, is *Durghasamaadansmarthah Shaktivisheshaha*. It is Lord's power that accomplishes something that is impossible of accomplishment for any other agency. This seems to be synonymous with the *Aghatanghatnapatiyasi Shakti* of the Lingayath School. But it is not so. Maya in the *Kashmere* School is *Tirodhanashakti* and begins to operate as the sixth principle (*tatva*). While operates it works wonders and accomplishes what is impossible for any other agency. The *tiridhanshakti* becomes a limiting adjunct of the Lord and gives rise to the five *Kanchuka's* (sheaths), of the Universal Experience (Shiva) with His five characteristics limited by the *Shakti*, namely *Nityatva* or eternity, becomes, *Kala* or Time of limited duration; *Vyapaktva* or all pervasiveness becomes *niyati* or space limited; *Purnatva* or all-completeness becomes Raga or attachment to something only; *Vidhta* or all-knowledge becomes (*Ashudha) vidhaya* or limited knowledge' and *Sarvakartatva* or all-authorship becomes *Kinchintkartatva* or *kalaa.* The Lord is entangles with these and becomes a Jiva. The meaning of Maya approaches here the etymological meaning of Maya, which being derived from Ma to measure, is taken to mean that by which something is measured if., the power of voluntary self-limitation. The first manifestation of the impure creation is Maya. It is this *Tatva*, the manifestation of which, first of all, apparently breaks the unity of Universal Self in its creative aspect. It manifests diversity independently of any external helper or promoter. It is conceived both as the power of obascuration and as primary cause of all the limited manifestations. In its former aspect it is often referred to as "Moha" and in the latter as *"paranita"*. Its effect also by transference of epithet, (*upachara*) is spoken of as *"maya"*. As such, Maya is limited; for whatever is

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manifested as apparently separate from the Universal Self is essentially so. It is pervasive, because it is the cause of the universe. It is subtle, because it eludes ordinary comprehension. As an aspect of Universal Self it is eternal.

The *Lingayaths*, as religious beings, start with *Linga* and end with *Linga* and therefore they are *Lingayaths* and not merely because they wear *Linga* on their bodies. To a Lingayath, *Linga* is the highest reality capable of being realized through devotional worship and meditation. The conception of *Linga*, as the representation of the though, symbol of the formless or the all-formed Almighty, is lofty and edifying, and there is no trace of either superstition or any impure and dirty idea attached to it.

Astavarana

The *Astavarana* are the eight fold shields or protective coverings of the devotee. They protect the *Anga* from the onslaughts of *Maya* on him and guide him safely for final beatitude in the world. They shield him from the evils attaching to the worldly life by putting the *Anga* out of the three taints and five sheaths. They guard and guide him on the way to enduring happiness by means of spiritual discipline and exercises. These eight Avaranas or guards have special significance of their own and are the means of Upasana in this religious life. The eight fold Avaranas are the spiritual one. They are *Guru*, *Linga*, *Jangama*, *Padodaka,* Vibhuti, Rudrakshi and *Mantra*.

Guru

Guru has the precedence over the other 7 Avaranas who is the *Guru* that initiates the *Anga* and guards him in the religious practices and spiritual culture. It is the *Guru* that performs the Deeksha ceremony of the devotee, who receives another or second birth as it were, the spiritual birth, in contradiction to the physical birth in the world. It is the *Guru* who gives the devotee real insight into the principles of the religion and explains the inner meaning of the practices and guides him on the path of *Mukti*. He gives the *Anga* the necessary instruction and training to enable him to get through the arduous courses of spiritual discipline. The *Guru* is the spiritual mother. He by his gracious look of the eyes, expressive of tenderness, wins the *Anga* and consoles, just like the kind gracious look of the mother which calms down in distress and comforts us. He has gained first-hand knowledge of the world by experience. His

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affection, tenderness, and saintly life, his vast knowledge of men and things charms the pupil, who therefore, finds great delight in serving him, imitating him, and acquiring knowledge from him. The *Guru* lives in the midst of a town or a village but leads a simple, hard, and exemplary religious life. His association is inspiring to the *Anga* or devotee, who follows the instructions of the *Guru* in toto. The devotee proceeds with the study of the principles and philosophy of the religion with the help of *Guru* and takes guidance from him wherever necessary. This is the reason why *Guru* stands first in the list of *Astavaranas*. The *Guru* at the same time, is worshipped in his meditative attitude, in a particular yogic posture with the control of breath by *Pranayam*, with the eyes fixed on the *Linga* in contemplation, the *Guru* is one who is a *Jivanmukta* and is an example of *Linga* worship and spiritual discipline. He is *Guru* because he not only gives precepts and oral instruction but also he is a model in *Linga*-worship and moral and religious life for others to follow. Hence the significance of *Guru* is twofold, as a preceptor and as a living example of the religious course strictly followed. The *Guru* is therefore, actually worshipped at least occasionally in every household if not everyday. He is the *Shiva* Himself being a *Jivanmukta*. When he is worshipped he is called *Jangama*, an inherent *Shiva*. The *Guru* is, thus, the first guard or shield of the soul against the assaults of *Maya*.

Linga

The *Istalinga* worn on the body by the *Lingayaths*. The *Istalinga* is *Linga* the gross or physical, the third of the first three modifications of *Ghanalinga*. (The three forms of Linga are *Bhavalinga, Pranalinga* and *Istalinga*) The *Istalinga* gives the worshipper that entire he desires to be worshipped and is, there fore, worshipped every day in devotion.

The *Linga* is given to the body at the time of birth, as is the custom. The *Linga* is always on the body of a person till his death. The person should never lose his *Linga*, because to lose it is to lose his life. The daily worship of the *Linga*, before the *Deeksha* ceremony of a person is performed, may be informal but necessary for the person, so that he may be imbibed with deep reverence for the God and impressed with the significance of spiritual discipline. Though informal, it has its own significance. It makes the wearer and worshipper conscious of his duty to God on account of his uncertain position in worldly life. It makes him aware of the necessity of religious life and spiritual discipline in the way

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of *Mukti*. The real worship of *Linga* as the religious exercise begins after the *Deeksha* ceremony performed by the *Guru*, who initiates a person into the secrets of religion.

The worship of *Istalinga* is not the worship of an image. The image is merely a substitute of a deity. But the *Istalinga* is not an image of the Lord but the Lord Himself. The devotee is also a modification of Lord and is called *Anga*. Thus the *Anga* and the *Linga* being modifications of the Almighty Lord (*Ghanalinga*) in His *Upasyoopasakaleela*, the worshipper and worshipped are face to face with each other in the worship. The idea underlying the *Upasanas* that the *Upasaka* is in no way different from the *Upasya*, the *Linga*. This is *Ahamgrahopasana*, in which the devotee starts with the idea that he is a part and parcel of Lord. Hence, the truth expressed by *"Ahambrhamasmi"*is put into practical form. This is *sahamarga* or the path of fellowship or friendship of the worshipper with the lord. Here the worshipper is taught that he is Swaroop of the Lord; and pure subjective worship of Lord is inculcated in him. The *Anga* looks on the *Linga* as his associate, a friend and a protector, not living apart from him, as in the case of image worship, but living with and in him and making him a part and parcel of himself, the all-powerful Lord. *Anga* is the microcosm of the lord, the macrocosmic *Linga*. The *Anga* has become *Anga* by being cooped up with the body by the working of *Jaadimaya*, the *Shakti* of the Lord. And to be free from the narrow limitations of the body he has to worship the *Linga*, the superior modification in relation with himself but identical with *Ghanalinga*, the macrocosmic soul. He has to worship with the conviction that he will attain his natural or original conditions of Lordship by pure subjective worship of Lord. This is *Ahamgrahopasa*. The *Anga* is taught that his real station is the Lord, in whom he lives, moves and has his being.

The *Istalinga*, as the *Upasyadevata*, is the object of contemplation. The *Anga*, the worshipper and associate of the Lord, fixes his attention on the lord, with a view to becoming one (*samaras*) with Him ultimately. The *Chitaikagrata* or the thought of the Lord by the subjective worship and subjective *Eshwarapranidhan* with the idea of *"Aham Bahamas"* is the highest spiritual ideal that deserves to be carefully and assiduously cultivated. Instead of fixing one's attention on something only with a view to concentrate the mind without allowing it to go back, so that it

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may be brought under full control, it is very much better that the mind fixed on the Lord in meditation as the ultimate resort and the object of attainment.'

In the preparatory stage *Linga* or *Parashiv* is *Swaroop* of the devotee. He is, therefore, his intimate friend and associate. But later the devotee gradually moves towards the higher ideal of *Samarasya* in the advanced stage. In the preparatory stage the *Bhakt* is in the *Savikalp Samadhi*; and in the advanced or perfected stage he is in the *Nirvikalp Samadhi.*

Linga, the *Upasya,* is the only representation of the *Bhakt* in his meditative posture. Thus the *Anga* is reflected in the *Linga*. This makes the idea of *Aahmgrahopasana* actual. The *Linga* and *Anga* are, therefore, the adverse and reverse of the same thing. The *Anga* realizes that *Linga* is macrocosmic because it is free from all limitations; while itself is microcosmic being confined to the body. He has to expand himself by tearing off the limitations. To attain the ideal and objective, he has to seek the Highest in himself by developing the power in himself. That power is *Bhakti*, the modification of Lord's *Shakti*, that *Bhakti*, without the sincere devotion and attachment to the Lord, nothing is possible. That is the root cause of self expansion.

The real *Linga* in its various forms is in the body. The six centres of nerve power, called the *Adharas* of *Shakti* by the *Shaktas* and the followers of *Raja yoga*, are the six places that the *Lingas* occupy. The worship of those *Lingas* to develop the human power into a vast all-reaching spiritual power is the real worship. This is internal worship and the superior or the only form of worship. But this is very difficult in the beginning before inculcating a theistic and spiritual attitude and cultivating the habit of devotion to the God with the conviction that is in him. For most men are of the emotional temperament and can be easily attracted to the path of *Bhakti*. Men of severe intellectual temperament living on the hollow pabulum of abstractions are always rare. An intellectual attitude has to be prepared for gigantically by emotion. And devotion to the God in some concrete form is necessary. *Istalinga* does this; and herein lies the real significance of *Istalinga* as the gross form or modification of *Ghanalinga*.

Hence the propriety of that is necessary for gradual psychic culture. The worship of *bahya* (outer) *Linga*, leads to the worship of *Atmalinga* in due course. The *Istalinga*, taken to be the gross form of *Ghanalinga* is to

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be filled with Shivakala or spirit of *Ghanalinga*; and the *Anga*, a part and parcel of the Godhead, is also to be inspired with the sincere spirit of devotion at the same time. The *Anga* is to be taught that the highest is in him and in the *Istalinga*. So the *Bhakta* starts with the worship of *Istalinga* that he is *Shiva* and *Shiva* is Jeeva. This is *Ahamgrahopasana* pure and simple.

Jangama

Jangama is an itinerant *Jivanamukta* moving about in the country for the guidance of devotees in their spiritual exercise and culture. He is, therefore, considered equal to the godhead, the *Linga* and also *Guru*.

The goal of soul is the liberation from the three limitations and mainly from *Anavamala* (the three malas (taints) Anavamala = inferior taint (feeling having bound with god, self limitation, Mayamala = illusory taint and Karmikamala = Physical taint) because liberation from that *Mala* makes the soul essentially one (Samaras) with Parashiva. The first frauts of *Anavamala* are the feelings I-ness and my-ness. A person, that has became free from *Anavamala,* has neitherI-ness nor my-ness, and does not refer to himself as an individual. He has no thought of his body, his family, his property, and other things that are ordinarily supposed to belong to him. The direct effect of freedom is the free flow of energies to know, to desire and to do. This librated soul, therefore, possesses unlimited knowledge. It can transcend time

The products of *Maya* only serve as means for the soul's activeness of knowing, desiring and doing. But as the liberated souls have nothing in this world to know, to desire and to do. These products of *Maya* are no more of any use to them. The liberated souls will give them up as soon as they attain liberation, i.e. they will leave the physical body. They require no place to live in or things to enjoy, as they get completely out of the domain of *Maya*. They move about and reveal the ultimate truths of religion to those that need them. They give valuable guidance in the course of spiritual discipline and religious exercises by their own example. Because they move about self-lessly, they are called *Jangamas*. The liberated men, the *Jangamas*, posses the necessary knowledge and are able to assist others in their endeavours to attain liberation. God, in his infinite mercy, so arranges the evolution that some become *Jivanmukta Jangama*. But these souls are in no way affected by their own mind and body. Having seen the true nature of

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Maya, they cannot be influenced by such insignificant products of *Maya*.

As the liberated souls require no further knowledge, they need not perform any fresh action, and are therefore free from the need of indulging in any activity for their own sake. As regards the fruit of past actions, they must all have been experienced except perhaps those that determine the nature of the body. If the body perishes at liberation it means that all the fruits of past actions have been experienced. If it does not, it follows that there are some acts left whose fruits it has yet to experience. Hence there are two classes of liberated souls, 1) those that leave the body at liberation, and 2) those that continue with the body even after liberation. The latter are *Jivanmukta Jangamas*.

When the soul is liberated from *Anavamala,* it can have a full flow of energy from *Maya* and acquire omniscience. But, if it is deprived of or liberated from *Maya* also, it cannot know or do any thing. It is quiescent. Then the love of God comes to it directly and fills it with divine illumination and makes it one with God. The *Jivanmukta Jangamas* on the contrary merge in the infinite love of God and shower that love on the unlibareated souls. Some *Jivanmuktas* remain in their original position as kings, statesmen, or householders, and make themselves useful to others by their acts and lives. Some become religious preachers and tour round the country attracting disciples and followers. But in the midst of these activities, they remain unaffected, all the acts being automatic and unattached.

They are man and God in one and are useful to men in both capacities. As they have been men like ourselves, we can understand them, have direct communication with them, and get from them an idea of true love, true knowledge, and true action. Their very presence uplifts and gives joy to people. They are each, in his measure, the embodiments of God, and thus demonstrate the existence of God. They are also the best objects of our worship. They are saints (*Shivasharanas*) and men of endless spiritual power. They make an indelible impression on the minds and drive out petty objects of the world that catch the fancy of the people. If we worship them, it will be the first form of worshipping God. This is why the *Jangama* is the third shield and is to be worshipped as reverentially as *Linga* and *Guru*. In fact no difference is made between the first three *Avarana* s, the *Guru*, *Linga*, and *Jangama*.

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Jangama, a Sanskrit word, etymologically means that which moves. When this word applied to a person, in the context of *Lingayath* religion, it symbolizes a man who moves from place to place preaching moral and religious values. The two main categories of *Jangama* are 1) *Sthira* and 2) *Chara. Sthira Jangama* is a person who, staying in *math* i.e., a *Lingayath* monastery, has to carry on mass education, preaching to the local people, and giving them the necessary guidance to achieve spiritual progress, and to perform certain rites and rituals concerned with birth, marriage, death, holy communication on special occasions etc. Chara *Jangama* is one who constantly moves around, preaching as he goes, without settling himself at any particular place and without accumulating any property of his own.

Vibhuti or Ashes

Is the fourth Avarana and smearing it on the body is the fourth religious exercise. All ritualistic exercises serve the twofold purpose of increasing the love for God and adherence to the religious life. Every religion has a set of religious exercises for its followers. Wearing of the cross by Roman Catholics is a special exercise intended for reminding them of the great solicitude that Jesus had for the salvation of the world. The cross induces them to accept, and to co-operate with for their personal salvation. Similarly, the sacred ashes of the Shaivas and the *Veerashaivas* remind them of the love of God, which reduces the impurities in them to ashes they make us feel that the Lords love is with us and creates in us a desire to lead a spiritual life. This underlying idea of Vibhuti and its contemplation and wearing are very important ritualistic exercises.

Rudrakshi

Is the fifth *Avarana*, The origin. Of *Rudrakshi* is described in a Puranic story that *Shiva* looked up in a meditative and concentrated attitude at the three castles of Tripura. The tears, that fell from his eyes in the act of looking up steadily, became solid and came to be called *Rudrakshi's* (on account of their falling from the eyes of *Rudra*). The *Rudrakshi* is a reminder of *Shiva*'s fixed gaze, the Yogic steadfast gaze. The devotee has to bear this in mind and try to cultivate *yogic* steadfastness like *Shiva*, the great matchless *Yogin*. They urge a devotee on to attain perfection in his *Yogic* meditation.

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Padodaka

The holy water, with which the *Linga*, the feet of the *Guru*, and the *Jangama* are washed, is the sixth Avarana. Water is the most important of the five elements from the point of view of cleanliness. The *Padodaka* is the symbol of the washing of three (the three taints Anavamala = inferior taint (feeling having bound with god, self limitation, Mayamala = illusory taint and Karmikamala = Physical taint) taints attached to the soul. *Guru* and the *Jangama* being *Jivanmuktas* are free from all taints. And their Padodaka is the embodiment of the taints. The devotee has to be free from the taints attached to his soul and takes a lesson from the Padodaka that he has also to strive to be free from the three taints, when he takes the Padodaka of his *Guru* or *Jangama*. The *Padodaka* is thus intended to produce a psychological effect on the devotee that he should wash his soul clean of the three taints, as he has to wash his body clean of all physical dirt. The exercise for making the devotee aware of the three taints and the necessary of washing them away from the soul gradually by cultivating merely ordinary water called teertha. It is the symbol of the water of knowledge (*Jnanajal*) that washes away the taints that stick to and constrict to the soul.

Prasada

Prasada, generally, means favor of grace of a superior being. In religion *Prasad* means favor or grace of God shown to the devotee. *Prasad* in Lingayathism signifies more than this. *Prasada* is the grace of god no doubt. But the real *Prasada* leads to the peace of mind by grace of God. Mind and its impure workings become the root-cause of all troubles ad worries of life by producing *Karmsanskar*, which causes the cycles of birth and re-birth. And if the mind is kept clean and pure and absorbed in the thought of God, the *Karmasamskar* is destroyed and all troubles and worries of life vanish. Hence the real *Prasad* is the stable cleanliness and calmness of mind; the purity and equanimity of mind, which as the soul's agent and organ, brings about the purity and freedom of the soul. Such is the real sense and significance of *Prasada*

To obtain favour of the Lord, the devotee has to keep constantly in mind that all that he does, eats, sees, hears, and enjoys is owing to the Lord. He expresses his gratitude to the Lord that whatever he enjoys and whatever he does is his *Prasada*. He should address all that he takes or

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does to God before taking or doing the same himself. This is *Karma* Yoga of the best type, when the mind is trained like this, and gradually develops the sense of purity and calmness. The soul gradually becomes free from Karmasamskar and ultimately attains freedom from further transmigrations, i.e., it attains final beatitude.

The practical example of *Prasada* is that of the *Guru* and *Jangama*, who gives *Prasada*. The *Bhakta* receives. He then learns from them the secret of *Prasad* and the way of addressing to God all that he takes and does. Thus, the *Prasada* of *Guru*, *Linga*, and *Jangama* is an exercise of utmost importance in spiritual development.

Mantra

A Mantra consists of certain letters arranged in a definite sequence of sound of which the letters are the representative sequence of sound of which the letters are the representative signs. To produce the designed effect, the Mantra must be intended in the proper way according to both sound (*Vani*) and rhythm (*Svar*); for these reasons a Mantra ceases to be such when translated and becomes a mere sentence. By Mantra the sought for *Devata* appears and by success (*Sidda)* therein vision is of the three worlds. As the Mantra is in fact *Devata*, by practice of this is known and no amount of theoretical knowledge will do. Not merely do the rhythmical vibrations of the sheaths of the worshipper but there form the image of the *Devata* appears.

Mantrasidda is the ability to make a Mantra efficacious and to gather its fruit, in which case the *Sadhak* is *Mantrasidda.* "Whatever the *Sadhak* desires that he surely obtains" .whilst therefore prayer may end in merely physical sound, Mantra is ever. When rightly said, a potent compelling force, a word of power effective to produce both material gain and accomplish worldly desires, as also to promote the four aims of sentient beings (*chaturvarga*), Advaitic knowledge, and knowledge, and liberation. And thus it is said that *Siddha* or success is the certain result of *Japa* or recitation of Mantra.

The mantra of the Lingayaths is "*Namha Shivaya*" and is called *Panchaxari* on account of its having five syllables. With Om ( ) prefixed, it becomes *Shadaxarimantra*. The mantra is expressive of Shiva and on that account is identical with Shiva, just as a predicate is identical with the subject.

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Parashiva, the *Parabrahman*, is the source of all *Tattvas.* The two letters "Shiva", including and express all the *Tattavs.* Moreover Shiva is *Vedavedantasar* that is, the Highest Spiritual principle and the pith that the Vedas and *Vedangas.* The Highest Principle and the devotee's devotion to it are needed. The Mantra containing the devotee (*Istadevata*) also expresses the identity of the Jiva or *Anga* (the devotee); this identity is the ultimate goal of the *Anga.*

Thus *Namha* expresses *Anga,* that humbly surrenders itself by his salutation to Shiva, the *Devata* (*Istadevata*), and *Aya* expresses the *Samarassya* or essential identity of Shiva and leads Jiva to the ultimate end. The *Mantrajaya,* therefore, leads to the development *of Jiva's* Power within him and to the gradual expansion of his soul, which in the end restores the *Anga* to its expresses the Pentads that constitute the *Samsar.*

The practice of the Mantra leads to salvation of Moksha. With *Om* prefixed to it the mantra becomes *Shadakshar* mantra (of six syllables). *Om* is *Pranava* and expresses *Parashiva. Om* is made up of a, u, m' and the three express the trinity of powers (*Iccha, Jnana, Kriya*), which are in turn identical with *Satt, Chitt* and *Anand*, The three positive qualities of *Parabrahman* according to Vedanta. The three powers are the three creative energies. The energy (*Nada*) in *Sadakhatatv*a springs from Shiva-*Shakti-Tattava* and solidifies itself (*Ghnibhavat*i) as the creative power of the Lord (*Bindu* or *IshavarTattva*) manifesting in the trinity of creative energies. *Om* then stands for the most general aspect of what which is the source of all, namely *Parashiva.*

The *Panchakshari Mantra* (*Namha Shivaya*) is but an extended form of *Om*, i.e. *Om* elaborates or explicates itself in the form of "*Namha Shivaya.*"

Thus *Om* and *Namha Shivaya* are one and the same and express *Parashiva.* The six syllables of the mantra (*namha Shivaya Om*) are identical with the six *Lingas* and six Chakras. Thus Na is *Acharalinga* in the *Swadhishtanachakra*, Shi is *Shivalinga* in the *Manipurchakr*a; *Va* is *Charalinga* in the *Anahatachakra; Ya* is *Prasadalinga* in the *Vishuddichakra*; and lastly *Om* is *Mahalinga* in the *Ajnachakra.*

The *Bijamantra* rouses the *Shaktis* in the form of the Six *Kala* s of the *Shakti.* The Kalas thus roused ultimately develop into primeval Power of *Parashiva* and 'at-one-ment' or *Samarasya* is the result. Hence the practice of Mantra is laid down for the attainment of Moksha. The

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practice of Mantra is said to be superior to the practices laid down by *Varnashramadharma.*

The *Mantrayoga* of the Lingayathism, which rejecting other mantra of the *Shakta* religion, lays great stress by the only Mantra, by the practice of which the highest end of the human beings, the Moksha, is attained. By the practice of different *Shakta* Mantras a variety kind of success (*Siddhi*) is attained. But such *Siddi* feeds the human vanity and is very likely to deflect the practitioner from the straight forward course and the main objective of Moksha. The variety of Success is very likely to lead the human beings to the abuse of the power attained. Hence, to avoid that likelihood, the Lingayaths have retained the only one mantra which enables the devotee to achieve the expansion of the self into ultimate 'at-one-ment' with *Parashiva* of Linga, called *Lingangasamarasya.*

Panchachara

The direction of the human beings in society is largely by imitation and suggestion which are psychological in their operation. An extended from of imitation and suggestion is the adoption of local, social or religious customs. The *Panchachara* are intended to convey to the members of the community the principles of religion and religious conduct by these two psychological operations. These *Panchachara* or five codes of conduct lay down for the individual member's rules of behavior as social beings. They are *Shivachara, Lingachara, Sadachara, Bhrutyachara* and *Ganachara.* The first two *Shivachara* and *Lingachara* are purely personal and but reject on other individuals of the community in their intercourse everyday (Sakhare, M. R, 2004:515-518).

Shivachara

Shivachara requires a *Lingayath* to believe that *Shiva* is the *Parabrahman.* The devotee (*Anga*) has to maintain all through his life the faith and belief that *Shiva* is the only God and only object of *Upasana.* Whatever devotional acts he performs, prayers he offers, and thoughts he thinks they must be all about *Shiva* and none else. This is *Shivachara.*

Lingachara

Lingachara is the worship of *Shiva* through *Linga,* the amorphous representation or symbol of *Shiva.* The worship of *Linga* is the worship of *Shiva.* The worship of *Linga* (*Istalinga*), the gross or physical, is the

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beginning of daily religious observances, prayers and contemplation, growing into the worship of the higher modifications of *Shiva*, namely, *Pranalinga* and *Bhavalinga*. *Linga*, the *Istalinga*, is the Godhead of the *Anga*, the devotee, who should remain faithful to *Linga* and serve him faithfully, thought his life, this is *Lingachara*.

Sadachara

Sadachara requires a *Lingayath* to follow a profession and live strictly a moral and virtuous life. He should earn money by working in his profession for his livelihood and for supporting his family. He should utilize his savings and surplus for others in their needs. He should furnish his *Guru* with funds for the propagation of religion and service of the public. He should feed *Jangamas*; the *Jivanmuktas* moving about over the country in the service of religion and to help individual devotees by guiding them in their religious practices, By *Sadachara* the members are required to make no difference between one *Lingayath* and another but should take all to be as respectable and good as *Shiva*. He should interdine and intermarry freely; with *Lingayaths*. Character, right moral and religious conduct, should be the only criterion and consideration in the intercourse with other members of the community; and nothing else like a high or low profession should, influence affairs of social life. This is *Sadachara*.

Bhruthyachara

Bhrutyachara is the devotee's attitude of complete humility towards *Shiva* and His forms of *Linga*. So also, he has to maintain the attitude of humility towards his *Guru*, who gives him all guidance in spiritual discipline and religious practices. Similarly the *Jangama*'s, the *Jivanmukta* s, and Shivasharanas should be treated with all respect and all humility. A *Lingayath* has to adopt the attitude of service and modesty towards all *Lingayaths* as children and followers of the same God. *Shiva* or *Linga* and the same religion. In short, the attitude in general of a *Lingayath* in social behavior and intercourse should be one of humility, modesty and respect for others; so also he should be kind to all animals and treat them kindly. This is Bhruthyachara. The conduct of a *Lingayath* is as a servant of the society and friend of all animals.

Ganachara

Ganachara is *Lingayath*'s behavior, towards the community as a whole.

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He should not tolerate scandal of the Godhead and ill-treatment of men and animals by others. As a member of community, he has to strive for its upliftment and development.

The short description of Panchacharas will make it clear how they are intended to cultivate the attitude of devotion and godliness, Universal brotherhood and cooperation between members of the community, and honest life and kindness towards animal world.

Shatasthala

The word *Shatasthala* is derived from "*Shat* means six and '*sthala* which means stage. The latter in the philosophical context means God. What is currently being practiced by ardent *Lingayaths* was expounded, propounded and systematized some 800 years ago by the *Lingayathism* saints. The practice of path enables one to achieve one's final goal of eternal union of the *Anga* (body) with the *Linga* (God). The *Shatasthala* is not just a lofty religious principle but a path, which permits one to accomplish life's ultimate goal. There is a close relationship between *Shiva*, the human being and the world. A *Bhakta* becomes *Shiva* by breaking the bondage created by ignorance, as accrued by unrighteous deeds and desires. The *Shatsthala* occupies premier position in the religion. The 12th century *Sharanas* practiced it perfectly. It is considered to be the brain child of Channabasava, who was entrusted by Basava with the responsibility and the task of expanding, expounding and explaining the *Shatsthala* path to the laity. It should be noted here that *Kamiagama*, the first of the *Shivagamas*, mentions the terms *Veerashaiva* and *Istalinga*. Both the *Kiranagama* and the *Yogajagama* state that a person without the *Istalinga* becomes unfit to receive the *Prasada* (consecrated food offering to God). The *Vatalagama*, the *Veeragama* and the *Parameshwaragama* provide detailed descriptions of the *Shatsthala* path. It begins by explaining that, an aspirant must have *Shivabhakti* in his/ her heart (Munavalli S. 2002: Pp111-113).

Bhaktasthala

Bhaktasthala involves the worship of *Guru*, *Linga* and *Jangama*. When one understands the true meaning of this *Sthala*, one conceives the true meaning of the trinity of *Guru*, *Linga* and *Jangama*. Through this *Sthala* one becomes free from the desires of the body and mind and becomes a *Bhakta* by virtue of his/her belief in *Shiva*.

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Maheshasthala

Maheshasthala involves the actual practice of the above concept, which enables to lose the desire for material wealth, not coveting and not longing for unrighteous sensual pleasures. The belief in *Shiva* becomes an unflinching faith through the observance of *Maheshasthala*.

Prasaadisthala

Prasaadisthala states that all things in this world are gifts of *Shiva* and whatever human receives as God's gifts must be returned to him through the intermediacy of the *Jangama*, who represents *Shiva*. Since the seeker offers back the gifts from *Shiva*, this is considered to be the *Prasaadisthala*.

Pranalingisthala

Pranalingisthala makes one aware of the inner being. Here the seeker comes to believe that the *Linga* is the *Jangama* and all actions are transformed into prayers. When one steadfastly practices this *Sthala*, one forgets one's body and mind begins to see and feel the presence of the inner voice, while reaching a state of self-enlightenment through personal experience.

Sharanasthala

Sharanasthala endows an individual with the feeling and knowledge of God's presence in his/her own soul and begins a direct dialogue with *Shiva*. This sublime feeling enables the seeker to see *Shiva* within himself/herself and in every other human being. The soul becomes filled with *Shiva-Jnan*, *Shiva-Bhakti* and *Shiva*-worship. Every thing becomes *Shivamaya* (filled with *Shiva*'s presence, and not *Maya* of illusion). At this stage one does not falter; one is self-sustained and self-aware of *Shiva*'s Grace.

Aikyasthala

Aikyasthala forms the final stage, which permits a *Lingayath* to fulfill her/his life's destiny. It is the culmination of the sublime achievement. One is at peace from within and without. His/her soul is filled with heavenly bliss. There are no desires and no wants. There is just the Supreme *Shiva* beckoning the soul to come and embrace Him.

Worship of Linga

Shivalinga, the amorphous representation of *Shiva*, is the image of *Shiva*

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based on the inner meaning. The *Linga* worn on the body, technically called *Istalinga*, is the miniature of *Stavaralinga* worshipped in temples. It is made of light gray slate stone obtained from *Parvatgiri* in the North arcot. To be kept intact all through the wearer's life, it is coated all over with fine durable thick black paste of cow dung ash mixed with some suitable oil. Sometimes it is made of ashes mixed with clarified butter. The coating is called *"Kanti"* or covering. The question arises whether the *Istalinga* is as much an image as a *Stavarlinga* and its worship is as much image worship as that of a *Stavaralinga*. The suspicion of the worship of *Istalinga* being image worship is likely to be supported by the worship by *Lingayaths* of image at home of particular family deities, which vary according to local customs and prevalence of local deities, male or female, more generally male deities. The answer to the question, weather *Istalinga* is an image and its worship is image worship, is an emphatic no. *Istalinga* is not image or *Prateeka* of *Shiva* and worship is not *Prtikopasana*. It is *Shiva* himself and its worship *Aahamgrahopasana. Daharopasana* is not the *Manasopasana* of the Prateek of *Parabrhman* but is the *Upasna* of the *Hradayantarvartilinga*, the *Jyotirlinga* or Pranalinga worn or borne in the heart, i.e., residing tin the heart. The *Upasana* of the devotee is the *Aahamgrhopasana* of *Parashiva*. The *Istalinga* or the *Linga* in its gross form is *Parashiva* himself; and the *Upaasak*, who is the microcosm of the macrocosmic soul, is brought face to face with *Parashiva,* the *Upassyadevata*, by *Aahamgrahopasana.* In the *Pratikopaasana*, on the other hand, the *Upassyadevata* is not face to face with the *Upasak* or the devotee. It is merely the representative or image of the devata that is worshiped. In the scheme of *Shatsthala* philosophy of *Lingayat* religion, the *Linga (SugunaShiva)* and *Anga* (the devotee of a human being) are only the twofold manifestations of *Parashiva*, the *NirgunShiv*, in his sportive activity called *Upaassyopasakaleela*.

This *Linga* is the upassya form and *anga* is the *upasak* form of *parashiva*. Similarly *parashakti*; becomes to fold, *kala* associated with *Linga* and *Bhakti* associated with *anga* or the individual soul. In this way *Anga* with *Bhakti* is the smallest possible model or the very abridged form of *Shiva* and his *Shakti*. The *Upasana* is, therefore, *Ahamgrahopasana*, because the *Linga* and *Anga* are not one and the same. *Linga* is three fold 1) *Bhavalinga* or *Linga* the ideal corresponding

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to (*Karanasharir)* of the devotee 2) *Pranlinga* or *Linga* the vital or mental corresponding to (*Sukshma sharer*) of the devotee 3) *Istalinga* or the gross or physical corresponding to (*stulsharir)* of the devotee. *Istalinga* is connected with the *Pranalinga* and the *Bhavalinga*. The devotee starts with the upasana of *Istalinga* and reaches by stages the *Pranalinga* and the *Bhavalinga* with the idea of him being a part and parcel of *Parashiva*. *Istalinga*, therefore, not being an image but is *Shiva* Himself.

Such a kind of upasana or mode of worship is called *Sahmarga* based on the *Yogavidya* of the *Divvyagamas* or the Divine Shaiva scripture. This corresponds to the remaining three modes of worship based on the remaining three Padas of the *Agamas*, the a*chryapada,* the *Kriyapada,* and the *Jnanapad*a. They are respectively called the *Dasmarga,* the *Satputramarga*, and the *sanmarga.*

The *Dasamarg*, or the path of servant following the master, is the disciple of the charyapada. It consists in the search of Lord in the objective *Prapanch* and has for its object the disposition of the ancillaries connected with this worship under the form of a material Prateek, the singing of his glorious ever and anon and the extensions of *Aathitya* (honor and hospitality) to his genuine servants. The satputramarga of the path of son serving the will of his father takes a higher step of worshipping the Lord under a mental prate*ek* formed in mind in accordance with the description in the *Kriya*pada of the Divine *Agamas*. In this stage the rites significatory of the purification of *Sthulasharir* (Physical body) of the worshipper and the symbolical and mental imaging of *the Sukshma Sharir* of the same are added on to the externals connected with worship of the Lord under a material Prateek. The worshipper behaves towards the Lord as a son does towards his father with a combination of reverence and affection. The Sahamarg that is contemplated by *Lingayathism* is pure subjective worship of the Lord. Here the Jiva is slowly disentangled from the lusts of flesh and its bondage to corruption and joined on to the Lord. The Jiva is taught to discern for itself, that its inveterate identification of its own self with the vrittis of *Chitta* and *Indriyas* is due to an inherited *Vasana*, and that its own station is in the Lord, in whom it lives, moves and has its being. For achieving this end, the whole of the *Yogapadas* of the *Agamas* is devoted and their practical bearing on the daily conduct of the search

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after God, is fully brought. Here the worshipper behaves towards Lord as an associate or a friend. Lastly the *Sanmarg*, the highest mode of worship, is the final step or stage of the *Veerashaiva* devotee, in which the subjective worship of the lord is further inculcated in letter and in spirit for attaining to the condition of *Sayujya or Samrassya*, in which condition the sense of triputi ceases to operate, the subject and object become indistinguishable, and the Lord alone is seen in place of His *prapancha* that we all see. This is the *Jnanmarga* where the devotee becomes possessed of Sahajsamadhi. The *charya* and *Kriya* disciplines are temporary or *vavharik* and *Yoga* and *Jnaan* disciplines are real and *Parmarthik*. The *sahamarg* is a stage preparatory to the *sanmarga*, in which the objective conduct of the worshipper in *sahmarg* is eliminated. In the *Sahamarg* the worshipper starts with the idea of being similar (*swarup*) to the lord and attains saruppya which by the sanmarga expands into Saujjya or Lingangasamarassya, as it is called technically in *Lingayathism*. Hence the *Istalinga* is not the prateek of Lord but the Lord himself and its worship is not that of prateek or image worship.

So far as the image-worship at home of *Lingayatas* is concerned, it has no scriptural sanction behind it. It is merely an imitation of the image worship of the other Hindus which is universal in India. It is certainly an imitation by the *Lingayaths*(Sakhare, M. R, 2004: 329-333).

The *Lingayaths*, as religious beings, start with *Linga* and end with *Linga* and therefore they are *Lingayaths* and not merely because they wear *Linga* on their bodies. To a *Lingayathism*, *Linga* is the highest reality capable of being realized through devotional worship and meditation. The conception of *Linga*, as the representation of the thought, symbol of the formless or the all-formed Almighty, is lofty and edifying, and there is no trace of either superstition or any impure and dirty idea attached to it.

Kayaka and Dashooha

Another very important feature of Basaveshwara philosophy is that he sought to bring about socio-economic equality in the society through his famous twin principles of *Kayaka* and *Dashooha*. *Kayaka* is regarded as an important means for the removal of all inequalitieseconomic, social, religious and spiritual. Basaveshvara gave a concrete meaning to

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the conception of work or occupation in the form of *Kayaka*. He gave it a spiritual significance, high honor, great importance, dignity and divinity, whether it was a high or low work(Patil. J. S. 2005).

Kayaka is a spiritual view of labor and not merely a materialistic view. According to *Kayaka* man has to sublimate work into spiritual motive. Sharana says "work itself is heaven". "Kayakave Kailasha". Every labour is looked upon by Sharana with high honor, dignity and spiritual significance. *Kayaka* doesn't encourage amssing wealth or hoarding of money. It is motivated by profit. *Kayaka* is to be done in the spirit of Dashooha. The earning from *Kayaka* is to be dedicated to the preacher or *Jangama* who in turn utilizes it for the good of the society. *Kayaka* is a duty by which each one has to maintain oneself, and render its proceeds to the welfare of all. This is the comprehensive view of *Kayaka* (Javali.V.K, 2004:139-144).

The democratic principle of freedom of occupation is embodied in *Kayaka*. The *Karma* theory which has given rise to Caste system in society is opposed to this principle. It dictates that each man's occupation is pre-determined by birth. It says that man has no freedom to choose any vocation he likes and no freedom to think and act as he likes. The protagonist of the *Karma* theory advocate that one has to follow the hereditary profession; that a farmer's son should become a farmer, a barber's son a barber, a preacher's son a preacher and so on. Basaveshwara revolted against this. He advocated freedom of occupation and dignity of labor. This is crystallized in *Kayaka*. Basavshwara says emphatically that he does not want to ask what *Kayaka* one is following. He condemns vehemently any discrimination on the basis of birth, sex or occupation. He considers *Karma* as an "impurity" (or *Mala)*. The history of India reveals that the *Karma* theory has hampered the progress of society and has caused economic stagnation. The *Kayaka* theory on the other hand supports the progressive view of the society and the development of national economy. Begging and idleness have no place in the *Kayaka* system of society. *Kayaka* and Dashooha emphasize self-denial and charity. *Kayaka*, according to Basaveshwara means, every one should be engaged in his work and it should be beneficial to society. He stressed that one should be honest and sincere towards one's work. Hence, according to Basaveshwara's principle of *Kayaka* all occupations are

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equal, have equal dignity and are equally beneficial to the society Basaveshwara was a practical philosopher. He made a signal contribution to practical philosophy through his concept of *Kayaka* interestingly enough; This concept is almost totally in conformity with the modern democratic principles and socialism. Its goal is an equitable distribution of wealth and work. In the *Kayaka* system of society every body works according to his capacity.

Thus, a person's position or status in society should be determined on the basis of his acts and character and not on the basis of his possession. A dustman has a different job from a schoolmaster and is likely to have a different circle of friends; but he ought not to be considered to be an inferior sort of man.

Basaveshwara's principle of *Kayaka* was quite opposed to the theory of *Karma*, which indicates that each man's vocation is pre-determined by birth. *Kayaka* concept opposes the kind of water-tight compartment of laborers which creates a system of hierarchy; it pleads for the free choice of occupation and thereby puts a death blow to the unequal division of laborers by the *Karma* theory.

As per the principle of *Dashooha,* since every one earns his minimum requirement through *Kayaka* he contributes the rest of his labour to the society rather than accumulating personal wealth. Therefore, *Kayaka* does not encourage the amassing of wealth; it is to be done in the spirit of *Dashooha,* which will bring to an end all kinds of exploitations and disparities of wealth. Thus, Basaveshvara enunciated not merely political equality; but also social, political, economic, religious and spiritual. The inequality, which he lamented, was not the inequality of personal endowments, but of the social, economic, religious and spiritual practices which created inequality and came in the way of development of individual personality. He went to the very roots of the state of nature in attacking the inequality created by human beings. As human beings are equal by nature in their wisdom and virtues, that should be maintained accordingly.

Anubhava Mantapa

Unlike any other religion *Lingayathism* was constitutionalized in a unique manner. In the historical development of religions, we usually see a prophet or a founder preaching a religion that is carried on

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through oral preachings which are later systematized and given a proper shape after a gap. *Lingayathism* was systematized hand in hand with its origin, or to express it more clearly, it was first systematized and later conveyed to the common masses. The reformative and prophetic *Lingayath* religion was systematized in an academy called "Anubhava Mantapa" which was established in 1140 A. D, at the city of Kalyana.

The house of religious experiences. Anubhava Mantapa is the unique contribution of Basaveshwara. This institution attracted seekers of truth so quickly that people from all castes, various occupations, and of different ranks gathered round the nucleus. This rare but monumental institution, also called Mahamane, Great House, contributed a vast quantity of mystic literature and a galaxy of seven hundred and seventy saints, together with thousands of followers within a short span of time. Among this constellation three hundred were writers, and sixty ladies were great saints, thirty of these produced a vast quantity of literature.

Many problems concerning the individuals and society were discussed in that assembly. When we go through the dialogues of Anubhava Mantapa we are surprised to see the first idea of a parliament generating in the history of mankind. Prabhudeva, a great Yogi of extraordinary achievement, was the president and Lord Basava acted as the prime minister. Chennabasava can be compared to the speaker while at the same time working as the editor, and compiler of *Vachana* literature. The only difference between the present day parliament and Anubhava Mantapa is that the members were not elected by the people, but were picked up or nominated by the higher authorities of the Mantapa; the necessary qualification expected being spiritual attainment. The problems tackled were of a various nature covering social, religious, spiritual, yogic psychological, economic and literary spheres.

Members of the Mantapa and followers of the religion were given full freedom of thought, speech and action. They were allowed to put any questions or doubts to get them cleared in front of the congregation and a systematic program was launched to record and to preserve the dialogues that were going on in the House. These discussions reminisced us of Dialogues of Plato, the great Greek philosopher. But they differ from the latter in being characterized by a high type of mystic

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experience. As silent documents we can see even today the caves cut out of the brittle stony hillocks, in and around the city of Kalyana. These mystics used to retire for the purpose of intense meditation. Mantapa can be called as Experimental Station where these mystic-scientists were engaged in finding out solutions for various problems of life, both spiritual as well as mundane.

The influence of the House of religious experience on society was immense, due to its multifarious attractions. The rational approach of the institution, and its simple as well as lucid way of communication, overcame the polytheistic and blind beliefs, which existed in the Hindu mind. The new approach, which was pragmatic, practical and realistic and the new concepts of God, soul, salvation etc were sowed in the minds of the common mass through community preaching. A direct method of worship and meditation without the intervention of any priest introduced a tremendous change in society along with an increase in the number of mystics. When the iron curtain of priests and temple craft which had stood between a sincere aspirants and God was cut, genuine seekers after religion were attached more and more towards religious values.

Mystic-philosophers of *Anubhava Mantapa* had no intention of withdrawing from society, from mundane problems, or from their worldly responsibilities, but tried instead to make their mortal life a means for salvation. That is why among the many rules of Anubhava Mantapa the first and a compulsory one was to take up a specific occupation. A person disinterested in '*Kayaka*' or profession would lose the privilege of obtaining membership of the academy. The idea behind this rule was that everybody's bread should be earned by the sweat of his own labour and he should neither become a parasite on nor an exploiter of society. We see in the literary record of Anubhava Mantapa the arrival of a great king Mahadeva Bhoopal from Kashmir, who renounced his kingdom, after being fascinated by Basava's philosophy. To secure membership of the House he had to take up the profession of wood-cutting.

Equal treatment was given to all the members of the Mantapa without any distinction of grade or caste. Haralayya, a shoemaker, was treated as equally and as nobly as Madarasa, a minister. Kakkayya, an untouchable, was equally respected, some times even more, than the Madhuvarasa who was a Brahmin by birth. Prabhudeva, the chairman of

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Anubhava Mantapa and a great yogi, was from the caste of "Natuvaras" who were considered as Sudras and lower castes in traditional Hindu society. He was installed as the first 'Adhikari' to the pontifical religious seat, Sunya Simhasana or the chair of perfection. He became the first Pope of *Lingayath Virakta* tradition or the traditions of ascetics. This challenge was a thunderbolt for the age old rigid caste system and a unique achievement of Anubhava Mantapa, which declared that.

The people of high caste, with their vested interests tried to impose on the ignorant masses the idea that the former are the issues of meritorious ancestry and that the latter are of sinful birth. Owing to their ignorance the low-casts and untouchables laboured under the delusion that they were born to be slaves because of the sins committed during and inherited from their past births. They believed that to strive to improve their miserable plight was a heinous sin, and that to live where and as they lived was their life's purpose as well as its fulfillment. There was a dire need to lift the evil of such illusions of inferiority. That is why, in order to brainwash this assimilated belief, Basava preached; "You too are human beings harboring the divine spark within you. You have every right to live as men and women in all respects equal to any one else, and the right to achieve saintliness and redemption". A sincere effort was launched to free both the high castes and the low castes from their respective superiority and inferiority complexes.

Anubhava Mantapa criticized sharply the meaningless differentiation of human beings as high or low either on their birth or on their occupation.

Unique preachings of equality charged with the acceptance of the parenthood of god and the fraternity of humanity fascinated the tortured minds and consoled the gasping hearts of the oppressed and distressed masses. The burning zeal of Basava to place religion on a democratic basis, his passionate love for God and his untiring energy in serving humanity added to the glory of Anubhava Mantapa.

Within a short span of time, the academy became well known all over the four corners of India, and even beyond her border to Afghanistan and Ceylon. Seekers of the truth from Kasmir to Ceylon, and from Afghanistan to Bengal flocked towards Kalyana. Marulu shankaradeva, a silent aspirant of the Mantapa is thought to be a convert from Sufism; and Singalada Siddabasavideva who wrote a

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commentary on the *Vachanas* of Basava was from Ceylon. The galaxies of saints were divided into three 1) *Avatarika Guru* 2) *SiddaGuru* and 3) *Sadhaka Guru*. Basava, believed to be the Avatarika, Primal *Guru* and founder of the Faith. Three great saints Prabhudeva, Chennabasava, Siddarama and the woman saint Akkamahadevi were sturdy pillars of the institutions, and were placed in the Siddaguru. Many other hundreds of great saints, who acted as different organs of the system were classified in the category of Sadhaka Gurus.

This missionary system introduced into society by the Anubhava Mantapa acted as a successful means of communication to inculcate the progressive ideas of *Lingayathism* and to enliven the spiritual urge hidden in the self of man. We hear from many literary sources of *Lingayathism* that these *Jangamas* travelled to far away places like Kashmir, Nepal etc, and attracted thinkers and sincere aspirants of truth towards the Kingdom of God. Thus due to its humanistic and compassionate outlook towards society and specially towards downtrodden people, Anubhava Mantapa became a spiritual power-house of that time ; it set on fire in many a clod soul and introduced a miraculous change in their lives. Stirring the minds of many sinful men and women it metamorphosised them into saints of an extraordinary caliber.

A point needs to be made clear before ending this issue. The *Lingayath* religion, being reformative in its outlook was more progressive than aggressive. It placed more emphasis on evolution by change of mind rather than on sanguinary revolution. So it is not to say that Basaveshwara and his followers were imbued with an antagonistic spirit towards any other community. But as, Rev. N. C. Sargent aptly says, "Basava's aim was not to oppose or propose any religious or philosophical system; but to show people the existing social and religious evils and, if possible, to remove these evils from society".

This institution is unique in several respects. In the history of spiritual movements in the world there is no other example, except that of Basava, where a founder of a faith or a reformer has adopted the democratic method of meeting together for discussing and for laying down the path of spiritual advancement and social reconstruction based on free thinking. Almost all the renowned teachers of the various countries in the world moved from place to place to preach their gospel or to interpret the earlier scriptures. Basava adopted a new method. He

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did not renounce life like Buddha nor did he move from place to place preaching the gospel. He did not write his commentaries like Sankara on old scriptures. He was a free thinker and led a host of people to think freely like him. The members of Anubhava Mantapa who participated in its deliberations followed various *Kayakas* or occupations. The deliberations and discussions took places in Kannada. They have been recorded in the form of *Vachanas*. Each saying or *Vachana* is a self-contained unit and is a free expression of the Sharanas on spiritual, ethical or economic subject.

The fundamental principles accepted by Basava and the other Sharanas of the Anubhava Mantapa may be summarized as follows:

All are equal; No man is high or low either by birth, sex or occupation. Woman has equal rights with man to follow the path of self-evolution. Each one should follow a profession of his own choice. All *Kayakas* are honorable professions. No *Kayaka* is either low or high. *Varnas* (or castes) and *Ashrams* (or stages) are to be discarded. Renunciation and dwelling in forest are ruled out as cowardly tendencies to escape from life. Inter-group marriages and free dining should be encouraged. Untouchability has no place in the society. Every man is free to think on all spiritual and social subjects. Reason and experience are the only guiding lights for free thinking and spiritual advancement. Language of the people should be the medium for imparting spiritual and secular education. All men have equal rights to participate in spiritual discussions, to acquire spiritual knowledge and follow the same path of self evolution (Javali, V. K, 2004: 139-144)

Equality and eradication of Untouchability

Basaveshwara led a social and religious revolution in order to kill the demon of caste and creed, which had threatened to rule the destiny of human beings in India on the basis of irrational notions of *Karma* or destiny. Born in to a Brahmin family, Basaveshvara set his own example by rejecting the ritual-ridden *Vedic* religion in favour of *Lingayathism*, an emerging vibrant religion having a great concern for the mankind as a whole including the ill treated, exploited and downtrodden classes of untouchables. Refusing to undergo the thread ceremony as per the Brahmin tradition, Basaveshvara championed the cause of the less privileged and led a revolution at the grass-root level. His revolution rallied around the low-caste people and created in them an awareness

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about the importance of their role in building the new community transcending the barriers of caste and establishing equality of social status and providing opportunities to blossom themselves out in all spheres of human life. He regarded all humans including the highborn priest and the lowborn untouchable as equal and gave them equal opportunities to work for their own salvation as well as for the welfare of others in the community. Basaveshwara's message to mankind was that religion and society are nobody's private properties and that all individuals are equal in the eyes of God and that they should be treated with equal justice and honor(Patil. J. S. 2005).

One of the most popular *Vachanas* of Basaveshvara, which gives a good impression of the close connection between social values and spirituality, is a situation of everyday life as narrated by him is as follows: "O Lord, let them not say; to whom belongs he, to whom, to whom? Let them say: he is ours, yes ours, ours! O Lord Kudala Sangama, Let them say: a son of your house!" In this *Vachana* Basaveshvara says that we should not question the people as to who they are. We should consider everyone as our own person. Every human being is a son of God and therefore he is our own man. Basaveshvara does not want even a stranger to be respected on the basis of his background, his family or caste, but he hopes to be admitted into the new circle of people who share the same spiritual heritage. This idea of universal brotherhood preached by Basaveshvara is in a way similar to the Hindu philosophy of *Vasudaivakutumbakam* under which entire mankind of the world is considered as one family. Basaveshvara works out the theme of the meaningless traditional divisions in contrast to the only real difference between people, which he sees in their attitude towards devotion. He says "I shall call all devotees of Siva equal, from *Brahmana* at one end, to the lowest-born man at the other end; I shall call all unbelievers equal, from the Brahmana

69. *Evanarava, evanarava, evanaravanendenisdirayya. eva nammava, eva nammava evanammavanendenisayya. Kudalasanganaama deva, nemma maneya mganendenisayya. SVS1/62*

at one end, to the untouchable at the other end; this is what my heart believes! In saying thisshould I have any doubt."

Here Basaveshvara explicitly refers to caste stratification, with Brahmana at the top and the low caste untouchable at the bottom,

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which has lost this meaning among the devotees of Lord Siva. In this way, the traditional division of the people into various castes is completely rejected. He rationally explains away the traditional caste divisions by adopting the most scientific method in the following *Vachana*: "The fetal seed cannot be implanted in the womb, except after menstrual flow. The function of semen-drops is ever the same; lust, greed, anger, joy and all other passions, are the same. One might read the sacred books, and hear the preaching of the sacred word; but what is the proof of one's high birth? The embryo is formed of the seven elements. It has the same birth in the same womb. The alliance of self and soul is ever the same. When born in the same way, all are one; none superior, none inferior. What is the usefulness of caste, that discriminates between human beings? As it is so, one became a blacksmith by heating iron; one became a washer man by washing clothes; one became a weaver by weaving cloth; one became a Haruva by reading the *Vedas*! Did anyone ever born through the ear? Therefore, one who knows the secret of the *Linga,* alone is well-born,"

Thus, all are born out of the same womb, whether they are of high-caste or untouchables and the soul is the same in all of them. Therefore, caste discriminations are of no use. Castes are nothing but occupational and functional groupings. On the basis of this idea, Basaveshvara rejected traditional classification of people into castes, but another division between devotees and worldlings that remains is no less strict than the old one. There are a few *Vachanas* in which Basaveshvara transcends all divisions. For example, he says that the earth on which all of us dwell is the same; and the water used for rites and other routine purposes is the same; hence there cannot be any person who can be condemned as an untouchable.

In this way, Basaveshvara uproots the conservative Indian understanding that the temple is ritually pure and the settlement of the untouchables a polluted place and must be avoided from ritual point of view. The temple is centrally situated, whereas the untouchables have their quarters outside the village or town. But the temple and the untouchables' settlement are both built upon the same earth, and in this image Basaveshvara connects both extremes of the purity scale. Further, he laments that it is the devotion of the devotee to Lord Siva that makes any place pure and significant and not by its ritualistic symbol.

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Symbolism of *Linga* is related by Basaveshwara to his egalitarian social views. The effect of *Linga* worship means a drastic change in social circumstances. The message of the *Vachana* is very clear: because of the divine presence in the *Linga* even the community of the untouchables

70. *Deva, deva binnha avadharu;, vipr modalu, antyaja kadeyagi, shivabhaktaradavaranellanonde embe. Haruva modalu, shvapacha kadeyagi, bhaviyadavaranellanonde embe. Hingendu namubudenna mana. E nudiyolage ella moneyashtu sandehaullade, haliudore muga koyyi. Kudalasangamadeva. SVS1/711*

71. *Holegandallade pindada nelegashrayavilla, jala-binduvin vfyavaharvonde, Asheyamisharoshaharusha vishayadiglella vonde.enanodi, ena keli, enu phala? Kulajanembudakkavudu drashta?, saptadhatusamamo pindam samyonisamudbhavam. Atmajivasamayuktam varnananum kim prayojanam eMdodagi, kasi kammaranada, bisi mwivalnada, hasnikki saliganada, vedavanodi haruvnad, karnadlli janisidavrunte jagadolage? Edu karana kudalasangamadeva, lingastahalavanaridavanekulajanu. SVS1/590*

72. *Nelanonde:holgeri Shivalayakke, jalvonde: shauchachamanakke, kulvonde: tnna tAnridvNge, phalvonde: shadusrushana muktige, niluvonde: kudalasangamadeva, nimfmnaridavange. SVS1/879*

can be elevated to the higher level. Just as the *Linga* can have an upgrading function for the untouchables, the reverse is also true and this is made evident by Basaveshvara in a metaphoric way when he says "What kind of man he might be, without the touch of *Linga* he is of inferior caste. But with the touch of *Linga* he gains a background, like the touch of the philosophers, Stone does change into gold. The Lord Kudala Sangama does not like those, who have all kinds of doubts about this."

The concept of *Linga* dispels all ritual purity and impurity. This is a revolutionary idea that could not even be thought by ordinary human beings at that point of time in 12th century when it was practically implemented by Basaveshvara. He brings out this revolutionary idea in a very lucid manner in the following *Vachana*: "Can there be impurity, where the *Linga* is? Can there be discrimination of caste? Where the *Jangama* is? Can *Prasada* be defiled, if it is tasted by the devotee, before offering it to *Jangama*? The impurity of unholy utterance is sin. None else but Lord Kudalasanga's devotees have achieved the consummation of the triple unity."

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Basaveshwara's concepts of *Linga, Jangama and Prasada* clearly established the ineffectiveness and insignificance of pollution of caste, which made it possible for people of all castes to join *Veerashaiva* community. Wherever *Jangama* resides there shall not be any kind of discrimination based on caste. Tasting it before being served does not spoil food in terms of *Prasada* to be offered to *Jangama*. This is the way in which Basaveshvara filled rationality into the religious faith of *Lingayathism* and transformed it into a vibrant and socially relevant religion acceptable to everyone. Many people belonging to low-castes and untouchables were attracted by the teachings of Basaveshvara and joined his movement for the establishment of casteless society.

Basaveshvara would not call any devotee of Siva by his caste, and never called himself by any caste. He would condemn the people including himself if it were to be an attempt to identify people on the basis of their caste. So he asked in a pungent way "Can I call Siriyala a tradesman, And Machayya a washer man? Can I call Kakkayya a tanner, And Channayya a cobbler? And if I call myself a *Haruva,* Lord Kudalasangama will just laugh at me."

Basaveshvara himself practiced first whatever he would preach others. To weed out the ideas of caste from the minds of the people he did not even hesitate a bit to identify himself as a relative of untouchables and felt proud of it. This point is made out by Basaveshvara again and again to root out the devil of caste from the minds of the people, which was so deep rooted in them. *Vachana*s narrating his relationship with the so-called low-caste people are abound and a few are narrated here to reveal the ideological base upon which his notion of secular society is built up. In a *Vachana* Basaveshvara narrates his relationship with the elders coming from the untouchable sector and pleads with the Lord about his identity on the basis of his relation with these people, in the following manner: "Our Madara Channayya is my father; Our Dohara

73. *Parusha muttida balika kabbunavagadu noda, linga muttida balika kuchittacharavagadu noda, kudalasangana sharanru anyavanariyaragi. SVS1/137*

74. *Lingadalli kathinavunte? Jangamadalli kulavunte? Prasadadalli aruchiyun te? E trividhadalli bhavabhedhavanarasuvenu, kudalasangamadeva, dha(ra)vattalenna bhakti SVS1/286*

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75. *Settioyembene siriyalana? Madivalanembene machayyana? Doharanembene kakkayyana? Madarnenmbene chennayyana? Anu haruvnebdade kudalasangayya naguvanayya. SVS 1/345*

Kakkayya is my elder uncle; Look, Chikkayya is my grand-father; Our Kinnara Bommayya is my brother; Then how do you not know me, O Lord Kudalasangama"

In this way, it is the low-caste people that constituted his family pedigree. During the period of Basaveshvara the high-caste people as a matter of right took low-caste people for illicit sexual relationships. The low-caste was always blamed as not having a good family background precisely because of this reason. To nullify this unfounded blameworthy attitude towards the low-caste people, Basawshwara describes and eulogizes his new family ties in a piercing language in *Vachana* in the following way: "The boy of the servant in Channayya's house, And the girl of the maid in Kakkayya's house , They went both to the field to gather dung, And then they made love. A child was born to them that was me. Lord Kudala Sangama is the witness to this!"

There cannot be any other better way than this to castigate the people who insulted low-cast people for the sexual exploitation they are subjected to by the higher ups in the society. Basaveshvara calls himself a product of one such illicit relationship. More so the relationship is between the lowest of the lowest being the children of the servants in the houses of untouchables. There could not be any other fellow who can be described as inferior to a child born of such a relationship. By claiming his social status as of such condemnable type he opens the eyes of the people as to their mistakes in ill-treating the low-caste people. When jealous persons jeered at him saying that he had no roots in the new religion since he had no relations there, he boldly answered them in the following *Vachana*: "You can say I have no kin, why? Nimbavve is my mother: She lives by fetching water; Chennayya is my father: He fetches fodder for the royal stable. You say I have no kin, why? I have a sister who cooks at Kanchi, O Lord Kudala Sangama, I but receive through your hands, the devotion my ancestors have hoarded."

Basaveshwara measured the worth of a man by his conduct and character and not by his caste. He used caste concept in a new sense in his moral teachings. A person is high-caste or low-caste not by birth but by his deeds. This can be seen in a series of *Vachanas* written by him

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An untouchable is one who is involved in evil actions, hurts others and is bad he says, in his character. He who wishes good to others is a man of real caste. Character is vehemently emphasized as the main consideration for a man to be described as of high or low status. Basaveshvara was unequivocal in praising those who were good in their character and deeds irrespective of the fact whether they were born in a high-caste or low-caste.

Madara Channayya, who was an untouchable by caste and about whom Basaveshvara had a very high regard as a great devotee of the Lord and whom he respected as his father, was also a great *Sharana* and has formulated a number of *Vachanas* reflecting the same ideas as those of Basaveshvara regarding the problem of untouchability. According to him, if one's word and action

76. *Appany namma madara chennayya, boppanu namma dohara kakkayya, chikkayyanemmayya kanayya, annanu namma kinnara bommayya, ennanetakkariyiri, kudalasangamadeva? SVS1/349*
77. *Chennayyaana maneya dasana maganu, kakkayyana maneya dasiymaglu, evaribbaru holdalu bernige hogi sangavamadidaru. Evaribbarige huttida maga nanu. Kudalasangamadeva sakshiyagi. SVS1/346*
78. *Emma tayi nimbiyavve nirneranedumbalu, emmayya chennayya rayakampanava heruv, emage aru ellavembiri, emmakka kanchiyalli banasava maduvlu. Emage aruu ellavembiri, emma ajjara ajjaru hadeda bhaktiya nimma kayyalu kombe, kudalasangamadeva. SVS1/352.*
79. *Koluvvane madiga, hoalsu timbavane holeya. Kulaveno Avandira kulveno? Sakalajivatmarige lesane bayasuva, namma kudalasangana sharanare kulajaru. SVS1/591*

are in agreement, then he belongs to high caste. If they are not in agreement then such a person cannot be of high caste, right action signifies high caste and wrong action, low caste.

Another contemporary of Basaveshvara was in full praise of Prabhudeva, the presiding deity of Sunya Simhasana in Anubhava Mantapa, for his kindness in elevating the people belonging to the lower-caste. Dohara Kakkayya expresses his gratitude to Basaveshvara for his kindness and grace in elevating him from the ordinary plane to the higher plane of life. He praises Allama for touching him and sanctifying him from his divine touch. *Linga* is a divine instrument to

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adorn the body of every *Sharana* to elevate him from his low-status to higher-status. He narrates the thrilling experience of electrified change that takes place in his body by the touch of *Linga*. This is how the whole movement becomes the saga of wonderful experiences of elevation of everyone of them onto the same plane by same process of wearing of *Linga* irrespective of the caste or creed in which they were born. *Vachanas* of the above type indicate how these Sharanas redeemed themselves of the taints of caste, of body and mind, of senses, life and will, of ignorance and forgetfulness with the aid of Basavanna.

Basaveshvara as a spiritual physician felt and realised the need for preparing the minds and hearts of people for generating the spirit of emotional integration, eschewing artificially created caste barriers. He was fully convinced that the political stability, economic prosperity, social cohesion, and ideas on unity and equality could be achieved only through the spirit of emotional integration. He did not merely preach solutions to do away with the evils of caste system and practice of untouchability, but practiced them himself. He was convinced that the evil of untouchability can be erased out of the society by developing the practice of inter-dining and inter-marriage, which he started as an invincible movement and able to penetrate the minds of people to a great extent.

As regard to inter-dining, Basaveshvara himself used to visit the untouchables' colony and mix up with the people there. One day, while moving about in that area, Basaveshvara entered the house of an untouchable devotee named Kambaliya Nagideva and took his food. This matter was immediately reported to the king Bijjala that by his promiscuous intercourse with the untouchables, Basaveshvara is spilling disaster around. When reprimanded by the king for his reckless behaviour, Basaveshvara stood firm and justified his conduct proclaiming that there was no difference between men and men or a low-born untouchable and a learned Brahmana. According to Basaveshvara, in the spheres of marriage and sharing of food and other things caste should not become a hurdle. If any one tries to make use of caste as a weapon to prevent inter-caste marriage and inter-dining, he is not a true devotee of Lord *Shiva*. He is like an impure woman taking bath in pure water.

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He tells the people that even the Lord takes food in the house of a devotee who belongs to the caste of untouchables and wears their clothes and sees the human world through their eyes. When the Lord *Shiva* himself does not discriminate, how can ordinary human beings do that?

Basaveshvara beautifully explains how Hindu traditionalism was shaken by the consumption of food by Lord *Shiva* in an untouchable, Channayya's house: when he says "Because our Lord Kudala Sangama, Ate at the low-born Channayya's house: The *Veda* trembled

80. *They say their vows of righteous! Living was infringed, by eating at the house of untouchables! And by wearing their clothes! They look for caste in making marriages! How can I call them devotees? How can I call them worthies? Listen, O Lord Kudalasangama! Their behavior is like that of an! Impure woman bathing in pure water.*

in fear; The *Shastra* stepped aside; The Tarka, unable to argue, became dumb; The *Agama* swerved away from its path." This *Vachana* indicates symbolically the of failure the traditional instruments like *Veda, Shastra, Tarka* and *Agama* to stand in the way of rationally conceived social and religious revolution that was taking place during that point of time. All these traditional weapons upon which the Hindu tradition of untouchability was built become ineffective and were unable to answer the questions raised by the revolutionaries regarding the heinous practice of untouchability. Basaveshvara goes even a step ahead in another *Vachana*, where he says that the food that is being cooked by a Svapacha of a dead dog's meat gets spoiled by the very shade of a Brahmana falling upon it and therefore it cannot be offered to *Linga* as a *Prasada*:

This is the most offensive way in which he defends the low-caste devotees doing their routine of offerings to the *Linga*. Any individual, even if he is a Brahmin by birth, should not watch the cooking of food to be offered to the *Linga*, if that person is not a true devotee. By the very sight of such worldly persons the food being cooked becomes impure. Therefore, it can be rightly be covered by the slippers of a devotee to protect it from becoming impure. In this way, Basaveshvara asserts that the slippers of *Sharanas* are much superior to the eyes of the *Brahmins* who have lost their credibility. Basaveshvara had gone to unimaginable levels in providing dignity to the lowborn. In an exaggerated version of a *Vachana*, Basaveshvara even goes to the extent of saying that he would

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eat the pan chewed by them, wear the clothes cast off by them and guard their slippers, if only they are the Lord's devotees irrespective of the fact that they are untouchables

He castigates those who question the credibility of an untouchable devotee about his impure way of living and eating. Devotion is the main force of purity and not the externally visible aspects of it. He exhibits his restlessness when these low-caste people show apprehension in giving him food as he belonged to a superior caste in a *Vachana* in his indubitable style: "Lord, do not lay on me the burden, of being born in a superior caste. Look, Kakkayya will not offer, even the cast-off food to me. Look, Dasayya will not offer, Even the buttermilk to me. The reverend Channayya will not accept me, Alas! Alas! Lord Kudala Sangama!"

In the *Anubhava Mantapa*, which he had established as a democratic forum for divine and intellectual discussion and discourse and thereby found solutions to all kinds of social, economic and religious problems, Basaveshvara advocated the eradication of untouchability.

It is very important to note that the movement led by Basaveshvara against the practice of untouchability was at a time when it was just not possible for any one to think in those lines. Such was the truth-value of his ideas that even after eight hundred years his ideas remain relevant to our society. It is true that his war against the practice of untouchability was disturbed by some

81. *Veda nadanad nadugittu, shastravagali kelkke sariddittayya! Tarka tarkisalariyade muguvattidditayya!agama heratolagi agaliddittayya! Namm kudalasangayyanu madara chennayyana maneyalundakarana SVS1/750*

82. *The pot in which the superiors cook food! Is a dog's skull, sir. The low-caste Svapacha's act of covering food with slippers! Lest the high-caste Samavedi cast eyes on it is a right one! It's Agama in practice; none should see him preparing food. That "the food seen by the worldly is unworthy of! Offering to the Linga" is Thy word! Lord Kudala Sangama!*

83. *Aavanadadenu shreemahadevana nenevana, bayatambula meluve, biludugeya hodeve, padaraksheya kaydu bdukuve, kudalasangamadeva. SVS1/464*

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84. *Uttama kuladlli huttidenmba, kastatanada horya horisadirayya, kakkayyanokkudanikka nodayya, dasayya shivadanavnereya nodayya, mannaneya cennayyanennuva mannisa. Unnata mahima, kudalasangmadeva shivadho shivadho!SVS1/344*

traditional minds that were successful in spoiting the ears of the ruler of the kingdom. But the point to be noted is that his idea of abolition of untouchability was a great idea. Though his movement failed, his idea did not fail. It continued to linger in the minds of the people of the country and got its due recognition under the Constitution when India became independent. It is in this way Basaveshvara and his ideas become relevant to 21st century.

Gender equality

If one makes the perusal of the classical religio-juridical literature, the *Dharmashastras,* the position of women in early India, appears to be miserable and degrading. *Manusmriti* contains verses, which are explicitly hostile towards women. The lawgiver warns men about women whose nature it is to seduce men. In a well-known verse, it is stated that a woman always needs protection by men: her father protects her in childhood, her husband protects her in her youth and in her old age, and her sons will protect her. A married woman should worship her husband constantly as a god, whatever be his character. Furthermore, all kinds of bad qualities are attributed to women in *Manusmriti.* They are created with a predilection for bed, seat and ornaments, with desire, fervor and unreliability, with a hostile disposition and evil conduct. Like this, the tendency was to present a pessimistic picture of the status of women during the ancient times.

This is only one aspect of the story. There is the other aspect under which, favorable interpretations can also be found in the classical Indian literature regarding the status of women. *Dharmashastra* raised a chaste wife to the rank of a goddess; it raised the mother to the rank of divinity, along with the teacher and the father, and placed them immeasurably below her to the right to love and veneration. She is the best of the teachers, and a super-teacher according to *Vishnusmriti.* So long as one has a mother he never feels old. Abandoning a mother, even if she is an outcaste, is both a sin and a crime. The first earnings of the student must be tendered to his mother.

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The position of women in Medieval Karnataka was astonishingly different from what the laws of *Manu* suggest. Women were dominant not only in the cultural field; they were as much active in exercising their political power. The contribution of women in religious and other social activities of the society were in no way inferior to that of men. The status of women was as high as that of men in the middle Ages in Karnataka.

In the entire Indian history, Medieval Karnataka stands as a unique period and place where movements for the emancipation of women from the traditional taboos were led by social reformers. Basaveshwara's social movement during 12th century was one such great movement, which brought about revolutionary changes in socio-legal conditions of women (Patil. J. S. 2005).

Basaveshwara and other *Sharanas* of his time have made exclusive efforts by putting all their energy for building a society of equals where both men and women could participate in spiritual and religious spheres of human activities on an equal footing. Discrimination or exploitation of women on the basis of sex is against the very principle of rationalism that was developed by Basaveshvara. The socio-religious movement led by Basaveshvara against the discrimination of caste, creed or sex attracted people from across the country including women. According to the *Lingayathism* of which Basaveshvara was a champion, men and women differ only in physiological level but they are one and the same in metaphysical aspect.

The *Shivasharanas* of 12th century understood and realized the position of women of their time and provided an equal status and opportunity on par with men in spiritual matters. Their action towards the emancipation of women can be considered as the first such movement systematically launched in country. The system of family preached by the *Sharanas* is quite unique, for spirituality is the starting point for any transformation to take place at the level of family which can have its influence upon the society as a whole. Therefore the *Sharanas* propounded the concept of equality between men and women first from the spiritual level According to the *Sharanas*, the soul is basically the same; it is only the body which appears as man and woman.

The *Lingayath* view of a man and woman can be best understood by

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the following *Vachana* of Devara Dasimayya, an elderly contemporary of who was deeply influenced by the philosophy of Basaveshvara: "A woman is identified, By her breasts and plaits, And a man, by his beards and mustaches, But the soul within the two, Is neither woman nor man, O lord Ramanatha."

The *Sharanas* have also pointed out that woman is not an illusion, but a living being like man in every walk of life. Considering woman as an illusion represents the self-aggrandizement of the male, which is unfair. Allama Prabhu, the presiding deity of the *Anubhava Mantapa*, a seat of intellectual discourse about the socio-religious aspects of human life exalts as under: "They say that woman is an enticement, No, no, she is not so. The real enticement is the insatiable appetite of mind, O Lord Guheshwara."

All *Sharanas* including Basaveshwara unanimously shared this view. Woman, property and wealth are not temptations. The real cause of temptation is man's uncontrolled and unchecked inner desire to possess them.

The *Sharanas* raise the question that when both men and women are made of the same metal why is it that one only can attain divinity? On the basis of this argument the *Lingayatha* philosophy does not dismiss woman as an obstacle in the path of spirituality. Siddharama, a notable *Sharana* of Basaveshwara's time upholding the nobility of womanhood proclaims that she is the embodiment of the God!

One of the distinguished female saint who emerged as colossus in the social revolution championed under the leadership of Basaveshvara was Akkamahadevi. She received highest praise from Basaveshvara because of her sheer perseverance and deep commitment to the ideas of liberation of the soul. Basaveshvara described Akkamahadevi as his mother and finds no appropriate words to praise her. Basaveshvara and other *Sharanas* joined in the chorus of her praise, as she was considered as the main source of *Bhakti*, *Mukti* and *Yukti*. In the same way Akkamahadevi also referred to Basaveshvara as her spiritual father. On the guidance and the spiritual leadership of Basaveshvara, Akkamahadevi contributed considerably to the cause of womanhood. Although she was married to king Kaushika, she did not consider herself as his wife. She even tried to enlighten him when he tried to molest her

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in the following *Vachana*: "Get back, I hate you, don't hold my sari, you fool, a she-buffalo is worried of its life, and the butcher, of its killings, the pious thinks of virtues, And the wicked of vices. I am worried of my self and you of lust. Listen, the only worry that haunts me is: whether my Lord Chenna Mallikarjuna, loves me or

85. *Mole mudi bandade hennembaru. Gadda mise bandade gandembaru. Naduve sulivatmanu, hennuu alla ganduu alla kana! Ramanatha SVS7/844/135*

86. *Honnu mayeembaru, honnu mayeyalla, hennu mayeembaru, hennu mayeyalla, mannu mayeyembaru, mannu mayeyalla, manada mundane aseye maye kana Guheshvara. SVS2/72*

not." Realizing that she can no longer stay with him, she throws away all her clothes at him and walks to the streets quite nude. The king was staggered and dazzled to see all such spiritual lustre of Akkamahadevi. It is said that he repented and cursed himself for having stretched his sinful hands on to her spiritual heights.

Akkamahadevi makes an appeal and also gives warning to such men, who have that lust or temptation, to tease or harass women. She appears to be the first and the most courageous woman of the spiritual world of womanhood.

She lambastes all such men who try to look at her nude body with passion. After renouncing her husband King Kaushika and worldliness, she goes in search of her real husband Lord Mallikarjuna whom she describes as eternal, immortal, ever beautiful and changeless.

When Akkamahadevi enters the *Anubhava Mantapa*, all *Sharanas* including Allama Prabhu and Basaveshwara put her to very stringent tests of spiritualism and thereafter accord her a hearty and warm welcome appreciating her attainments of spiritual heights. All of them were surprised to see how she could overcome the bodily passions at such a young age. All *Sharanas* and *Shivasharanas* involved in the movement, asserting the principle of equality on the basis of soul, contributed to the women's movement to transcend material demands and aim at spiritual attainments. It was a movement against the exploitation of women in the name of religion. Basaveshvara, who spearheaded the movement, was determined to abolish all obstacles and social disabilities inherent in the traditional order. Sharing the

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experiences and thoughts of all the activists of the movement, Basaveshvara asked: "What is the sex of the soul?" He attached importance to the principle of *Kayaka*, in which, every man and woman are engaged and actively participated in spiritual discourses and deliberations at Anubhava Mantapa. On this basis he undertook the mission of elevating the womanhood by the introduction of the ceremony of *Linga Deeksha*, thereby giving them equal opportunity in religious and spiritual activities along with men.

If one looks at the fundamental principles accepted by Basaveshvara and other Sharanas of Anubhava Mantapa, following principles clearly indicate the concern they had for the emancipation of women:

- No one is high or low either by birth, sex or occupation.
- There is no discrimination between man and man and between man and woman.
- Woman has equal rights with man to follow the path of self-evolution.
- Woman can also take up any *Kayaka*.
- Inter-group marriages and free dining should be encouraged.

These principles indicate that discrimination against women only on the basis of sex is challenged in the twelfth century itself. Women were provided equal rights along with men for the purpose of developing their personalities. Women were permitted to take up any kind of work of their choice and have economic independence. Women were free to marry even from other castes

87. *Emmegondu chinte, samgArnigondu chinte; dharmigondu chinte, karmigondu chinte, enge enna chinte, tanage tanna kamada chinte, olle hogu, serge biwu mrule.*

Enge chennamallikarjuna devru valivaro valiyaro emba chinte! SVS 5/108

Many of these principles have found their way into the Indian Constitution even after 800 years, which shows how worthy these principles are.

Basaveshwara has given out a few *Vachanas* where he makes a reference to how woman is to be looked upon. In all these *Vachanas* the main point, which he drives home to his followers, is that to desire

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another man's wife is a sin. All *Vachanas* express the spiritual view that the male devotee regards himself as the wife of Lord *Shiva*, his relationship with *Linga* is a marriage in which he is the female having subordinate position. Basaveshwara himself has expressed this view in very clear terms in the following *Vachana*: "Listen to me dear fellows; I wear these men's clothes, only for you... Some times I am a man, Some times I am a woman, O Lord Kudala Sangama."

Another important idea put forward by Basaveshvara is that both husband and wife should be clean, like inside and outside of a pot. Otherwise, their married life would be like a washing of the arrack pot only from outside. He has stated this "Husband a devotee of *Shivalinga*, Wife, a devotee of Mari, Masani, Husband takes offerings, made to God, Wife takes arrack and flesh., The devotion of those whose containers, And the food are not clean,. It is like washing the arrack pot, from the outside, Kudala Sangamadeva."

Basaveshwara asserts that in material relations the caste or the clan should not become an obstacle. Both husband and wife should become the consorts of the *Linga*, in that the *Sharana* is the wife and the *Linga* is the husband. Basaveshvara was comparing the spiritual seeker to the wife and the Divine Being to the husband. Further, there must be similar spiritual relationship between the husband and the wife. A chaste lady remains ever dutiful to her husband and will not resort to any immoral life even if her husband turns out to be indifferent or shows no love for her. In the same way, a true devotee cherishes firm faith only in one God, the supreme, as a faithful wife has only one husband. This is how he spiritually rationalizes the wifehood in his *Vachana*: "Behold a faithful wife has but one husband. Behold a devotee, the true believer, has but one God, Look, the fellowship of other gods in base, Look, to speak of other gods in harlotry, should Lord Kudalasangama see it, Look you, he will cut off your nose." This *Vachana* makes it clear that belief in many Gods and husbands is nothing but a religious infidelity. Faith in only one God is the way for attainment of spiritual progress in life. For this reason Basaveshvara emphasizes the importance monotheism.

One cannot collect a good number of *Vachanas* and say that this collection is as good as a treatise of Basaveshvara in the cause of women's emancipation. Such a theoretical treatise is unthinkable of

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Basaveshvara. He was a mystic with unrivalled practical knowledge of the world. He thought that practice was better than either pleading or preaching. We get evidence of his broad view of women in his treatment of his wife, Neelambike, his sister Nagalambike and a good number of women-saints who participated in the religious discussions at the Anubhavamantapa. Both married and unmarried women were there among the women saints. Basaveshvara never laid down that a wife could be an obstacle to high spiritual attainments. His wife enjoyed a good deal

88. *Ganda shivalingadevara bhakta, hendati marimasaneya bhakte, gandakombudu padodaka Prasada, hendati kombudu sur-mamsa, bhanda-bhajana shuddavilladavara bhakti, hendada mawikeya horge tolednate, kudalasangamadeva. SVS1/104*

89. *Nambida hendatige gandnobbane kaniro, nababalla bhaktange devnobbne kaniro, beda beda, annya daivada sang holla! Beda beda, paradaivada sanga holla! Beda beda, anya daivavembudu hadar kaniro, kudalasangamadeva kandade muga koyva kaniro.SVS1/617*

of freedom and was close followers of him and helped him in his discharge of political and religious duties.

But at the same time considerable importance is given for the character of women. In some of his *Vachanas*, Basaveshvara insisted that women should be faithful to their husbands and disapproved of adultery.

The harsh verdict of Basaveshvara towards adulterous women is metaphorical. The unfaithful wife is an image of the devotee who is not faithful to Lord *Shiva* but worships other deities as well. In another *Vachana* the theme of unfaithful woman is worked out in a very beautiful manner:

I went out for an adulterous play,
But all I got was counterfeit.
Behind a dilapidated wall I hid,
But there the scorpions stung me.
The watchman heard my cries
And he tore off my sari.
I went home in utter shame

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And my husband slashed my back.

So the Lord Kudalasangama took his fine.

The meaning of this simile is that adversity and trouble are not accidental, but they can be seen, as a punishment from God, for adulterous behavior, whether in the realm of morality or in that of worship, will have such inevitable consequences. Hence, alongside the liberation of women from all kinds of exploitations, Basaveshvara has balanced his movement by insisting upon the good character of women.

If character is so vehemently insisted upon by Basaveshvara, at the same time his attempts to uplift the low-caste women by absorbing them into the mainstream of life and describing them as "P*unyastri*" or "meritorious woman" is noteworthy. The *Veerashaiva* sources indicate that the spiritual community attracted many wandering ascetics from various schools. It is not hard to imagine that *Tantra* mendicants or so-called sensual *Jangamas* too found their way to Basaveshwara's Center. Even a number of temple girls or the girls who are put as prostitutes in temples according to some religious practices also followed the new devotional movement of Basaveshvara. An example of Sankavve and her *Vachana* is significant in this regard: "I took a pledge; I shall not take another one. If I would do so, they would strip me naked, and kill me. If I would deliberately associate myself with one, who breaks the vow, they would chop off my hands, ears and nose, with a glowing knife. I will certainly not do so knowingly, O Lord of No Shame.

This *Vachana* stands as a good example of the spirituality of the women who left her sensual life. The theme of this *Vachana* is monotheism. Sankavve uses similes from her

90. *What a surprise! The ruin of you, you bitch! Making eyes at your lover! Whilst you have a husband! Who gives you food and clothes! The Lord Kudalasangama! Will chop off your pretty nose! So that your teeth stick out.*

professional background to explain the theme. In her ardent style, she not only stresses the loyalty to *Shiva*; she also reveals the morality of her professional life.

The life stories of some of the female saints give a good impression of the position of women in the movement. Men and women on an equal footing made discourses in the Anubhavamantapa. Highly unconventional women-saints like Akkamahadevi not only found

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prominent place in the movement but also its most accomplished female mystic and poet. Another profound philosopher who could develop her talents in the company of devotees is Muktayakka. However, the female ascetics were not the most remarkable characters among the women of Basaveshwara's fold; because their way of life was modelled on the classical pattern of world-renunciation. A completely new phenomenon was the participation of married women in the movement. Among them Neelamma was the most brilliant and independent thinker. Mahadeviyamma was also a very influential teacher and poet. Both had the advantage of a privileged position in the community; but there were also women devotees of lower castes. The working in the community constitute a convincing proof that the revolutionary ideas of the *Vachana*karas about the equality of men and women led to new opportunities for women, even from traditionally unlearned circles. Low-caste women like spinners, rice pounders and sweepers were allowed to participate in the discussion and share their experiences in the spiritual path. Ayadakki Marayya's wife Lakkamma is one such example. She not only participated in the discourses at the *Anubhavamantapa,* but also guided her husband when he neglected his duty. Her concern is that no one should neglect his duty. She tells him almost scoldingly to get on to his work first, or else it amounts to disservice to God. When her husband awakes to the vital importance of *Kayaka* and *Dashooha* and in his hurry collects double the usual quantity, she gets offended and says as follows in a *Vachana*: "This greed is good for kings; what has a *Shiva* devotee, my Lord, to do with such?"

She directs the husband to drop back the surplus rice grains and invite all the Sharanas, including Basaveshvara, for food. When all of them were mysteriously fed to the full satisfaction, all of them were wonderstruck. This is the greatest example of sustainable use of the natural resources and safeguarding them from depletion. This philosophy of Lakkamma also speaks volumes in terms of intergenerational trust and responsibility of which we talk so loudly in the modern context.

Another example is that of Mahadeviyamma wife of Moligeya Marayya. When Marayya exhibits his yearning for union with the Divine impatiently, she was surprised. She wakes up her husband to the essentials of the *Sharana* way. All the movements of a *Sharana* are rooted in non-duality. When this has been attained, there is no need to hanker after further union. She gives the analogy of conjugal union,

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which demands the stripping of all robes, ornaments and so on, which come in the way. Delusion of body is like robes. When these delusions are removed, the idea of the heaven and the Union vanishes. She says: "Why, sir, this sense of twain, within your wisdom, that you should want, to join the other? When a grove of camphor burns in fire, Can you detect charcoal and ash? Do realize your heart unto yourself; do realize how you dispelled, my shyness when we came together."

Marayya acknowledges the wisdom of his wife and becomes one with his own self, and then Mahahdeviyamma also attains salvation after helping her husband to attain the eternity. Thus, it is not surprising that women were sometimes portrayed as no less than the Divine itself.

Sidharameshwara describes the exalted position of woman with reference to mythological accounts in the *Vachana*. *Ganga* seated in *Shiva*'s head and Parvati on his lap, Saraswati on Brahma's tongue and Lakshmi leaning against Vishnu's chest. If the Gods appreciate female company that much, woman cannot be sexual object or demonic power; but they must be divine.. Though this exaltation is historically unrealistic, the disregard for women which was so deeply rooted in Hindu culture was certainly removed in the *Lingayath movement* led by Basaveshvara. There are a good number of reformers who worked for securing social, economic and political rights for women. But none worked to secure equal rights in the field of religion. Basaveshvara is the only one who declared that woman is entitled to religious initiation and salvation same as man.

Lingayath faith is altogether independent of the Hindu religion. Hinduism is primarily based on the authoritativeness of the Vedas and the Varnashramadharma. As Lingayathism repudiates the distinctions of caste, it is said to be non-Hindu in spirit.

Features of Lingayathism such as *Shaktivishishtadvaita, Astavarana, Panchachara, Shatasthala,* Universal fraternity, worship of only formless God, Gender equality, Equality, Denial of untouchability and Idol worship, *Kayaka* and *Dashooha,* provide abundant evidence to consider Lingayathism as progressive, scientific, and world humanitarian religion.

91. *Ta madida hennu tanna taleyanerittu, ta madia hennu tann todeyanerittu, ta madida hennu Brahmana naligeyanerittu, ta madida hennu narayana edeyanerittu, adu karana, hennu hennalla, hennu rakshashiyalla; hennu pratyaksha kapilasiddamallikarjuna SVS4/618.*

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CHAPTER- III

COMPARISON OF HINDUISM AND LINGAYATHISM

In this chapter comparison of the Hinduism and Lingayathism is taken up. By means of comparison it is to be decided that which out of Hinduism and Lingayathism has more relevant socio-ethical factors. To compare, firstly listing of similarities within the religions is taken up. Secondly comparing the ethics of Hinduism and Lingayathism is taken up. Some comments with regard to both religions interms of ethical principles and social practices are made.

Similarities between Hinduism and Lingayathism

Both the Hinduism and Lingayathism have their own unique features, of-course the Lingayathism is derived from the Hindu culture. Lingayathism whole heartedly accepts some of the ethics belonging to the Hinduism. Herein listed some of the similarities in both the religions such as a) *Karma Siddhanta*, b) Rebirth, c) *Omar* (Á), d) Incarnation (Avatar), e) Concept of Soul (*Atman*), f) Prohibition of Polygamy (many Wives) and Polyandry (many Husbands), g) Denial of polytheism (worship of many gods), h) Six Passions (*Arishadvarga's*) are very good Friends.

Karma Siddhanta

The doctrine of Karma attempts to provide an explanation to the gross inequalities in the birth and in the social conditions of people. There is abundant inequality in the status and experiences of individual man which is inexplicable by empirical methods of enquiry The doctrine of Karma offers a rational and satisfying explanation to this inexplicable phenomenon of birth and death, happiness and misery of inequalities in mental and physical attainments of the living beings in their imperial and mundane existence, law of Karma is the natural principle of cause and effect which says "As you sow, so you reap".

Hinduism advocates this doctrine to prove an explanation to the inequalities as well as to regulate the human action, since the present is determined by the past actions, and the future is determined by present actions.

Lingayathism which has drawn its ethical spirit from Hinduism accepts the theory of Karma in toto The three fold distinctions of *Karma* as *Sanchita Karma*, *Prarabdha* Karma and *Agami Karma* is also accepted

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by *Lingayathism*. The fruits of the past Karma have to be experienced in order to get rid of it. In one of his *Vachanas* Basaveshwara explicitly states that unless you experience the results of your past Karma, they will not leave you.

Thus both *Lingayathism* and Hinduism join together in advocating the theory of law of Karma as explanation of the inequalities of lives.

We find the life that person who has the same means for enjoying happiness do not get the same type of happiness. Misery comes in unequal ways. This difference cannot be without some cause which is not seen. This unseen cause is karma. Misery in this life is too much of a fact to be ignored. It is also true that there is abundant inequality in the status and experiences of individual men, which s inexplicable by empirical methods of inquiry. It is necessary to explain this inequality. The doctrine of karma provides this explanation.

The doctrine of karma offers a rational and satisfying explanation to the apparently inexplicable phenomena of birth and death, happiness and misery, of inequalities in mental and physical attainments of the living beings in their empirical or mundane existence. Man's present life, which includes his physical features, place and family of birth, success and failures, affluence and poverty, happiness and sorrow, is the direct result of what he has done in his past lives. Karma is the natural principle of cause and effect "As you sow, so shall you reap", is the inexorable law of nature. Our actions are the causes that produce proper effects at proper times. This eternal and universal law of karma is quite strict, uncompromising and related, and as precise and impartial as other natural laws of say gravity and motion. Even the theistic systems have never ventured to dispute the force of karma.

While one child is born healthy and intelligent and into an affluent family, another is born diseased, mentally retarded and to poor parents. Such inequalities at birth are incompatible with an all-powerful, all-loving, all-benevolent and all-just God. These inequalities can be explained only on the basis of the law of Karma.

Karma Siddhanta is a prominent ethics which is accepted by various religions of the world. It encourages accepting life as it comes. It provokes humility. Karma has three types first one is Sanchita Karma, second one is Prarabdha Karma and the third one is Agami karma. It is

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indeed guiding theistic religions like Hinduism, Lingayathism, Sikhism and even also atheistic religion in God such as Buddhism. Karma Siddhanta denotes optimism. One should discharge his part of duty for the sake of work; without thinking of rewards.

Sanchita Karma: the Sanchita Karma gives very clear definition to present sorrow and happiness. This is nothing but the reward of our previous accounts deeds. This warns us to be careful while in every day's practices, as must pay for the activities which we take up this time.

Prarabdha Karma: Prarabdha Karma gives clarifications about various grim/ serious sorrows thrown on us, as we did not commit any wrong in our present life span. At present we must experience the situations, the schedule of same is fixed by creator on the account of our past life as Prarabdha Karma.

Agami Karma: on the account of Sanchita *Karma* and *Prarabdha Karma* our present and future happenings are decided, is nothing but Agami Karma. This warns us to be optimistic.

By persual of *Vachana* literature we may conclude that the *Lingayath* accepts the *Karma Siddhanta*. Let us study few *Vachana*. *Guru* Basaveshwara "Let one be scholar or a fool, the stored-up *Karma* will not leave unless he can consume it. Look you, the Revelations say your current *Karma* will not go unless you use it up - it will not leave in whatever you would be. Blessed is he who makes an offering of his soul, to Lord Kudala Sangama, Along with his *Karma*'s fruit."

In the above *Vachana Guru* Basaveshwara specifies that *Karma* does not leave anybody. *Karma* is mandatory to every one. This above *Vachana* is an evidence for acceptance of *Sanchita Karma* and *Prarbdha Karma*

We can also take up a *Vachana* of greatest woman saint first woman writer of Kannada, Akkamahadevi, "The joy of eating which you expect Can not be satisfied unless you eat; The pain

92. *Panditanagali, murkhanagali, sanchita karma undallade manadu,!! Prarabhhakarma bhogisidallade hogadendu!! Shruti sarutaidave noda!! Tanavaava lokdolagiddadeyu bidadu,!! Karmphalagudi koodala Sanamadevange!! Atmanaivedyava madidavane dhanya.!! SVS 1/774 V of B 773*

of feeling which you expect Cannot be soothed unless you feel. Lord Chenna Mallikarjuna looks with compassionate eye at the time that *Karma*, come to body, stops."

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In this *Vachana Jaganmata* Akkamahadevi is providing strength to the acceptance of *Karma Siddhanta* by *Lingayathism.* By this the above evidence of the Vachana literature we may come to conclusion *Lingayathism* accepts whole the karma Siddanta.

Rebirth

The doctrine of rebirth which is a corollary of the doctrine of Karma is accepted both by Hinduism and Lingayathism alike. According to the Hinduism, belief in rebirth is a necessary concomitant of the doctrine of karma and in fact central to it. The two concepts of karma and rebirth cannot be considered in isolation; they present a chain of causation, perhaps two sides of the same coin. The results of a person's deeds may not appear in his present life and in order to reap the results of his deeds he has to be born again. The doctrine of karma, therefore, presupposes transmigration of soul or rebirth. Karma regulates not only the present but also the future; the chain of moral causation links the three points of time in a being's existence.

The doctrine of rebirth or that of karma is not the doctrine nourishing and encouraging inactivity or idleness. On the contrary, it is the doctrine that inspires man to make proper efforts and to undertake good deeds leading to progress. So it is a very useful doctrine conducive to progress. It advises man to make proper efforts to destroy limitations of past karmas, to advance on the path of liberation and ultimately to attain liberation. It is the function of the doctrine of karma to connect the present birth with the past and the future births in the cause-effect chain. If the future birth does not seem to be good, then it is in the hands of man to make efforts to improve it as also to effect changes in inauspicious karmas and in their fruition. This is what the doctrine of karma teaches.

Rebirth is second part of the *Karma Siddhanta,* by considering the definition of *Sanchita Karma*, person experience present situations of life as reward of his previous account of *Karma*. Here previous *Karma* (*Sanchita Karma*) means account of *Karma* belonging to the past time of this birth and also of last births on the basis of previous birth. It is clear that one must take many births until he overcomes all his deeds from the cycle of worldly bonding (*Bhava Bandhana*). In other words, until he achieves the salvation (*Mukti*).

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Lingayathism accepts rebirth. Let us examine some details through the *Vachana* of *Guru* Basaveshwara why must be, O Lord, the bonds of life should turn, a noose around my life? May be, in a bygone birth, I lost sight of *Linga*, May be, in my past grandeur, I lost sight of Jangama..., for, if I knew, would the Lord Kudala Sangama; permit me to bear the burden of this life? B of V 7

In the above Vachana Guru Basaveshwara provides reasons for his birth as he took rebirth on the grounds of previous Karma. And the birth cycle continues until release of birth circle (Bhavabandahana).

The above *Vachana* declares that rebirth does not leave any body and it is indeed applicable to every human being. Lingayathism is also abiding by the rebirth ethics

93. *Unalendu banda sukha undallade hariyadu!! Kanalendu banda Sukha kandallade hariyadu!! Tanuvinge banda karma hariva kalakke!! Chennaamllikarjunadevaru kadeganninda nodidaru.!! SVS5/80. V of A 126*

Omkara (Om)

Omkar which is a combination of three letters A U M has significant place in the ancient Indian tradition. Starting from the *Vedic* period. Vedic scriptures identify it as the first manifestation of unmanifest it is because of this reason Omkara is prefix to the names of all Gods. Lingayathism accepts and adopts Omkara as a significant religious and spiritual first principle of the universe. It is believed that uttering the name of Shiva without prefixing 'om' is a sin. Further omkara has the following characteristic of which is accepted by both Hinduism and Lingayathism by Lingayathism on the account the Omkar is prefix for manifest form of the unmanifested God.

A	U	M
Knowledge Power	Will power	Acting power
Generation	Organization	Dissolution
Sat (goodness)	Chit (mindset)	Ananada (Bliss)

The above characterization informs us that knowledge, power and action; creation, sustenance and dissolution are all included in the principle of Omkar.

Concept of Atman (Soul)

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Every human being is created by God, the human body is being composed by the five particles (*Panch Bhuta*); God being the supreme soul is placed his source in every being in the form of *Atman* (soul). Without *Atman* (Soul) the mere body is nothing but null. The concept of *Atman* encourages us to think about God and adopt moral practices to join the supreme reality. Both the Hinduism and *Lingayathism* accept that The *Paramatma*/God (supreme soul) is sexless; every *Atman* (individual soul) is equal and dear to the God.

Prohibition of Polygamy (many Wives), Polyandry (many Husbands)

Polygamy (Many wives): As we scan the practice of the masses we may find social evils in the name of social activities. Referring to the history many kings had more than one wife. They did so as measure of passion, to expand their kingdom and many other purposes. And in the contemporary times to have many wives is considered to be an act of bravery.

Polyandry is a procedure where a woman will have more than one husband. We find many instances of such practices in Puranas and epics of Hinduism. However this practice was strongly contended by the Vedic tradition.

Polygamy and polyandry are denied by the Hindu scriptures. *Atharva Veda* clearly denies the polygamy and polyandry as, "Polygamy (many wives) and Polyandry (many husband) both are non-Vedic" (Sudhakar Chaturvedi, 2004: 144).

Jedara Dasimayya in one of his *Vachanas* clearly rejects the Polygamy (Many wives) "Be brother of female-slave, prostitute and of others wife. Not at all become falcy towards perfect at practice, towards the well furnished-devotee's and towards fair persons, Should become regular at daily practices, lose delusion from mindset. Realize Rameshwara *Linga* whose life is code of practice.

Neither meet other's women, nor touch other's wealth, nor aspire God of others. One who becomes the graced slave to *Guru Linga Jangama*. Is the *Guru* of all the three worlds O Ramanatha."

For the denial of polyandry (many husband) we should refer to the *Vachana* of *Guru* Basaveshwara "If my heart is swayed, whichever way I look, thy curse, the pioneers' curse, be upon me! O Kudala Sangama Lord, I see, the great Goddess herself, in my neighbor's wife!"

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By the above *Vachana* and *Vedic* hymn we can conclude that both the Hindu and *Lingayathism* deny the polygamy and polyandry.

Six Passions (Arishadvarga's)

Hinduism identifies Six passions which are common to all individuals. These are called Arishadvargas 'Ari' here means enemy who is to be avoided. The Six passions control and limit the thought, word and deed of human being. They not only harm the individual's life but also cause negative implications in the social and spiritual life. Hence an individual should never become a slave to these and became a burden to himself, to the family and to the society. The Arishadvargas are: *Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada* and *Matsara.*

Kama (Desire) literally word *Kama* has two meanings first one is desire and another is lust. Lust is also a form of desire. Desire is the worst disability that which has many fold fields. Desire is very sensitive. In most of the situations desire tends towards regress and it restricts attitude.

Krodha *(Anger)* is a root cause of many body disorders. Anger is very harmful to both the person become anger and sufferer of the anger. Becoming anger may cause high blood pressure, acidity, indigestion, heart attack, rigid mentality.

Lobha (Selfishness) keeping the wealth along with higher than that of necessity is noting but selfishness (*Lobha*). It makes man cruel.

Moha (Delusion) delusion makes man non-thinking being. Everything he earns leads to preserve for the sake himself or his family. Delusion is merely confused with love.

Mada (pride) being may harm so many of the society, pride activities hurt surrounding peoples, as one can notice ardent passion restricts to a limited.

94. *Paravadhuva nereyade: prdhanava tudukde,!! Paradaivadichhevdeyade!! Guru linga jangamakke varadasanadaatane!! dhare muurakke guruvagippanai ramnatha!! SVS7/819/110*

95. *Dasi veshi paranarisahodarnagirabeku,!! Vrutahastange, sadbhaktange, satpurushanage vrutakke tappade!! Nemakke nittyavagi bhavabhramey alidirabeku!!Acharve pranavada rameshwralingavarivudake !!SVS5/503/70*

96. *Elli nodidadalli manvelasidade!! ane nimmane, nimma pramatharane, Paravdhuvanu mahadeviyembe!! Kodalasangama. SVS1/446. V of B 445.*

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Matsara (Jealousy) is not common thing. It troubles breath, makes eyesight weak to the person affected by this. It destroys good credit and good sense. Jealousy is horrible sin. Jealousy bifurcates man from man, society from society, state from state, country from country.

All these above passions are also accepted by *Lingayathism* as hurdles to virtuous and happy life. However, Lingayathism believes that these six enemies can be used in a different way for the development of the individuals. Chennabasavanna stresses this fact when he says that "To a devotee of Shiva *Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha Mada* and Matsra are essential for a different purpose. *Kama* is oriented towards *Linga* (God); *Krodha* should be oriented in controlling Senses; *Lobha* in possessing the *Padodaka* and *Prasada* of Lord; *Moha* or love towards the Guru; *Mada* or taking pride is to be used in practicing Shivachara and *Matsra* is towards wrong earnings, other women and excess property. Channabasavanna also talks about where these six passions are not needed.

Thus, as the name Arishadvarga denotes avoidance of these six passions and should have better knowledge of these and try to keep him away from these. And one learns to make better use of all these, by controlling them. *Lingayathism* argues that *Arishadvargas* should be moulded in such a way that they can be controlled into powers.

Comparison of Doctrines

Given the above similarities with regard to Karma Siddhanta, rebirth, Omkar, concept of Atman, denial of polygamy and polyandry, six passions, let us now compare some of the doctrines and practices of the both the religions while finding and their differences comparison of the doctrines and proceed in this section let us compare the doctrines of Hinduism and Lingayathism such as

- *Advaita, Dvaita and Vishistadvaita --- Shaktivishishtadvaita*
- Hindu scripture --- *Vachana*
- *Dana --- Dashooha*
- *Upanayana---Deekshe*
- Casteism --- Socialism
- Worshipping the Deity --- *Istalinga*
- Worship through Mediator--- by oneself

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- Way of worship, Ritualistic --- Scientific
- Conversion, Difficult --- welcoming

Advaita, Dvaita* and *Vishistadvaita --- Shaktivishishtadvaita

Advaita, Dvaita and Vishistadvaita together form the Vedantic philosophy. These three systems have interrupted Upanishads in three different way. Let us compare some of the essential doctrines of these Vedantic systems with Shaktivishishtadvaita philosophy of Lingayathism.

Doctrines about the creator Jeeva (living being), Brahma (Creator) and Jagat (the world) are the fundamental entities which are discussed elaborately in each doctrine about the creator, sustainer and dissolver. The nature of the relations of these three varies from one doctrine to another.

Advaita *(*Non-dualism*):* In *Advaita* Jeeva (living being) and *Brahma* (creator) are one and the same. Both of them are formless consciousness. The *Jagat* (the world) is only a false appearance which proves that Brahma is second to none. *Jeeva* (living being) has the appendage of mortal body, hence is considered to be in bondage and seeks freedom from this mortal sheath, which is called *Moksha* and for this purpose *Jeeva* has to study the Vedanta in order to understand the nature of mortal life, its limitation and the eternal bliss to be attained. *Jeeva* is given the same status as that of Brahman; hence He remains totally detached from the mortal influences in spite of being in the mortal body. All the mortal functions are carried out by Antahakarana which plays an important role of a *Jeeva* in bondage.

In *Advaita*, God is only one. Plurality is not admitted *Jnana* and *Vishaya* are heterogeneous and the former of godhead and the latter is the cosmos. *Advaita* says that he latter is superimposed on the former.

Advaita the doctrine of one unique divine power; *Brahma* and universe pantheism

Dvaita (Dualism): The assertion of two always distinct principle, the soul and the universe. Which classifies all entities into two. One is independent and dependent. Vishnu is independent and all others are dependent. In this school there exists plurality of God and that Vishnu alone is supreme and is to be worshipped.

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It quotes profusely from *Puranas* and relies upon them considerably. It is frequently mentioned that *Brahmatarka* as the source of its philosophy. It is also believed that, even after *Moksha*, the *Jeeva* remains separate from Brahman. *Bhakti* plays an important role in this philosophy. We find many books which refute the theories of *Advaita* and have been used unsavoury language in criticizing *Advaita* and other schools.

Vishistadvaita (Qualified-Non-Dualism): In this doctrine *Jag at* (the world) is real, not false. *Jiva* (living being) is entangled in mortal life. Brahma is supreme with these two subordinates, *Jeeva* (living being) and *Jagat* (the world) as being accessories to Him, which are called *Shareera* (body). Moreover it gives importance to *Bhakti* or devotion and it is said that both *Jnana* (knowledge) and karma help in intensifying devotion. It also admits that, although Brahma is formless, he can assume any physical form for the benefit of a devotee.

Let us examine the *Advaita, Dvaita* and *Vishistadvaita* doctrines. These doctrines about nature of God have been in force in Hindu ethics. However, competent definition of God was not satisfying the thinkers. Apart from these, a distinct faith is being seen. Cults of worshippers of *Devil*, Kali and etc female deities as the goddess of power are the cause behind the creation.

Guru Basaveshwara gave a better expression about the creation of universe. The truth behind creation, sustaining and the dissolution of the whole universe in the form of ***"Shaktivishishtadvaita"*** (a special Monoism along with power). The philosophy of *Lingayath* religion is monotheism and is called *Shaktivishishtadvaita*. (Sakhare, M. R, 2004: 433) It is, as has been noted before, adopted from and improved upon *Kashmere Shaivasiddhanata*. Though adopted from the *Kashmere* school of *Shaivism* it is given the distinct name of "*Shaktivishishtadvaita*" to give prominence to *Shakti*, the power or Energy of the Lord, *Parama Shiva* (the *Parabrahman*), living in intimate union with him. The intimate union or oneness of *Shiva* and His *Shakti*, as we have already stated, is beautifully expressed by Kalidas in the words. *Shakti Parameshwar* as intimately one as the words and their senses. Words, divested of their sense, are mere babbles and there can be no word without sense: Similarly *Shiva* and *Shakti* cannot be apart

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from each other; they are inseparable ones. The attributes of Para Brahman, according to *Veda*nta, are *Sat, Chit* and *Ananda*: These are the only three positive qualities that are attributed to Brahman, which can be spoken of in no other positive terms but only in the negative terms as "Naiti- *Naiti.*" (not this, not that etc.) According to *Shaktivishishtadvaita* these three positive qualities of *Parabrahman (Parashiva)* are well expressed in terms of the Lord's self-consciousness As "Aashmi, Prakashe, and Nandami" i.e., the Lord is conscious of His being, shining, and enjoying independently of anything else. Hence he is *Swatantra* and his *Shakti*, in the form of His self-consciousness, is a part and parcel of His Self. *Shiva* is the supreme entity. He is the all-knowing, all-doing, all-sustaining being called *Prakasha*, the serene Lord, all-pervading indivisible and infinite. He, as the underlying reality in everything, is all-transcending. That is to say, His nature is primarily a twofold aspect-an immanent aspect in which he pervades the universe, and a transcendental aspect in which He is beyond all universal manifestations. He is the origin and source of the universe and is the *Parabrahman*, as the *Veda*ntis are pleased to call him. He is *Vimarsharupa*, i.e. he is Self-conscious. The vibration of the perfect egoity is His *Shakti* and through her He holds and visualizes the entire universe of objects as "this is the *Vimarsh*, the Perfect Egoity, is the *Shakti*.

Guru Basaveshwara comments that both the (*Advaita* and *Dvaita*) doctrines are lagging behind to give proper introduction of the God. He says "What do you, good Sir? Reading of *Dvaita* and *Advaita*, unless you melt for the *Sharanas,* like wax on fire? Unless you believe, that the Immovable, And Movable are one? Kudalasangama Lord, What is it worth? A wreath of empty words?"

Sharana Adayya also provides sufficient reasoning for failure of *Dvaita, Advaita* doctrines to give the concept of God. He claims that the true concept of god is beyond the reach of both the *Dvaita* and *Advaita.* When he states "It can be seen following the series of *Veda Agama,* It can't be seen personalities understood the reality beyond *Dvaita-Advaita.* It can be seen sang for favor of voice, it can't be seen personalities understood reality beyond sound. It can be seen personalities indulge in enjoyment through body (*Tanu*), sense (Karana) and enjoyment/lust (Bhoga) It can't be seen personalities became happy through knowing the Lord Sourastra Someshwara."

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As we go through all the above doctrines we may find that *Shaktivishishtadvaita* has a more reined and spiritualistic explanations of the God and the creation.

Hindu scriptures --- *Vachana*

The Veda is considered as ancient literature, oldest among all the literature of the world, *Vedas* are the bases for Hindu Religion. Upanishads are the texts with suitable instances, which define *Veda.* The language and format of the Vedas are not so easily comprehensible. *Shastra*, Purana and Bhagavad-Gita are written for better understanding the ethics of Vedas as per the need of changing world and time.

97. *Dvaitadvaitavnodi ena maduvirayya?!! Namma sharanarigu(ya)ragagi kargadanakka,!! Stavara jangamavonde endu nambadanakka,!! Koodalasangamadeva! Bariya matina maleyallenahudu?!! SVS1/191 V of B 191*

98. *Vedagamangagalu hoda saraniyalli hodarallade!! Dvaitaadvaitakke nilukada nijava kandavranaranu kane,!! Vaniya hanginalli ulidulidu hodarallade!! Ulugadagida niluva kandavaranaranu kane!! Tanu karana bhuvana bhoganagala kandallade!! Saurastra someshwaralingadulumeya kandu!! Sukhiyadavaraaranu kane.!! SVS6/1092/334*

Confusion and misconception of God and differences between man and man are in force at the contemporary society. Bhagavad-Gita talks about Varnashrama, which was rejected by Basaveshwara. Basaveshwara was a preceptor of brotherhood (Samatavadi). Guru Basaveshwara is of the notion, all the human beings are equal, Guru Basaveshwara comes out of the discrimination of Male-Female, *Varna*, Caste and Creed. Four fold Varna system of *Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya* and *Shoodra* advocated by Bhagavad-Gita. *Lingayathism* propounds universal equality. Hymns (Sloka) no's 40, 41, 42, 43, and 44 from 1st Chapter of Bhagavad-Gita, it differentiates Male and Female. Equal rights to everybody are not provided. Hymn no 32 and 33 of ninth Chapter of Bhagavad-Gita specifies that *Shoodra* and *Vaishyas* are sin born. Brahmin and *Kshatriyas* are grace born. It shows inequality. Hymn No 19 and 20 from ninth chapter of Bhagavad-Gita specifies, that when Arjuna denies killing, Sri Krishna preach that, you are not killing, your soul does it. By war, only body of opponent will cease, soul never ends.

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Basaveshwara treats human being as representation of Soul. Guru Basaveshwara preaches to opt for truthful and pure actions. So Bhagavad-Gita and *Lingayathism* are quite opposite to each other. It is not correct to impose Bhagavad-Gita as commonly great.

Vachana literature is the basis of *Lingayath* religion. It is called to be a living literature because *Vachana* literature is created on the basis of self learnt experience (*Anubhava*). The themes of these *Vachanas* concentrated upon common, downtrodden, suppressed classes, poor, masses and welfare of every living being. Although it has highest level of ethics, the *Vachana* literature is created for the welfare of majority i.e., the commons. The *Vachana* literature is of the commons, by the commons, and for the commons.

Most of the Vachanakaras (*Vachana* writers) are of the opinion that *Veda*, Upanishad, *Shastra*, *Purana* and Tarkas failed to represent the supreme reality in a proper way and they failed to take masses into confidence.

Let us examine the *Vachana* literature in this regard one by one. *Brahmins* fail to practice the ethics; They fall into the way of regress. *Guru* Basaveshwara "Behold their plight- The priests who have read the *Vedas* and, Go down the streame! They say: 'I bow to the radiant God'! But look, they have no thought at all, of anybody else, O Kudala Sangama Lord!"

To realize the God in a proper way, three fold *Dashooha* is better way than that of Veda, *Shastra* and *Shruti. Guru* Basaveshwara "Shall I say *Shastra* is great? It only exalts *Karma*! Shall I say *Veda* is great, it tells of animal sacrifice! Shall I say *Smriti* is great? It seeks in the future! As He is in none of these, Lord Kudala Sangama can be seen, now here except, in triple dedication."

The Veda, Shastra, Agama, Puranas are unable to define God in true sense. By Ambigara Choudayya, a Sharana of having *Kayaka* of sailor. "Those who read *Veda* are affected by fate; rather they understand the place of God. Those who read *Shastra* are affected by doubt, rather they understand real *Guru,* Those who read *Agama* affected by happenings, rather they understand the

99. *Vedavnodida vipraru honlalli hoda keda nodire! !! 'Bhargo devashya dhimahi' embaru!! Vabbarigagi vicharavilla, nodire!! Koodala Sangamadeva.!! SVS1/586 V of B 585*

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100. Shastra Ghanvembene? Karmava bhajisuttide! Vedaghanavembene? Pranivadheaya heluttide,!! Shruti Ghanavembene? Munditu arasuttide, Allelliyu nivillada karana,!! Trividhadasoohadallallade kanabaradu Koodalsangamadevana.!! SVS1/208 V of B 208

relation between Sharana-God beyond Creator-Creation. Those who read *Purana*'s are affected by previous way; rather they do not understand elders through overcoming previous *Karma*.

All these donot know how the movable reminder is offered to *Linga*. So our Lord Ambigara Choudayya told they are unable to see the *Linga*. Achieving the salvation (*Mukti*) is not possible through *Veda*, *Shastra*, *Purana*, Agama, and Tarkas."

Vachana evidence is presented by Kadasiddeshwara. Is evidence for this "Readers of *Veda* are children of unfertile woman. Readers of *Shastra* are children of harlot. Speakers of *Purana* are children of mid-woman of harlots. Seeing persons of *Agama* are children of Brahmin lady. Speakers of Tarka-Tantra are children of expert-lady of *Vedas,* All those knowing and practicing *Veda Agama Shastra Purana* Tarka-Tantras are the children of woman belonging to the caste of tumblers. For these persons are of idle minded, corrupt at practice and basically low caste. There is no end for worldly bondage, never get salvation, *Brahma Vishnu Rudra* and all other deities, the authoritative for the grace these above are not eligible to over come from worldly bondage. Our Lord *Sharana* Kadanolagana Shankara Priya Chenna Kadamba *Linga* Nirmaya Prabhu warns there is no salvation for such persons."

Devotee should have firmness in not accepting the God of others. A high standard preaching of constancy regarding monotheism is discussed in the simple *Vachana* of *Guru* Basaveshwara, "The Sharana must have the constancy to say, 'I will not have another's wealth; The *Sharana* must have the constancy to say, 'I will not have another's wife; The *Sharana* must have the constancy to say, I will not have another god; The *Sharana* must have the constancy to say, '*Linga, Jangama* are one'; The *Sharana* must have constancy to say, '*Prasada* is the Truth': Lord Kudala Sangama disdains Such men as have no constancy."

Hadapada Appanna argues that *Yoga*, Study of *Veda* and *Shastra* cannot take us towards salvation. Let us have a glance at the following *Vachana*. "It's told reality is understood through *Yoga*, It's told reality is

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understood through knowledge, It's told reality is understood through *Veda*, It's told reality is understood through *Shastra*, Listen O brothers its cant understood through *Yoga*, not through knowledge, not through *Veda*, not through *Shastra*, *Sharanasthala* (Stage of

101. *Vedavanodidavaru vidhigolagadarallade!! Devariha thavanridippudilla.!! Shastravanodidavaru samshayakkolagadarallade!! Sadguruvanaridudilla.!! Aagmavanodidavaralla aguchegige olagadarallade!! Aadi anadiyindittana Sharana-Linga sambhandhavanridudilla.!! Puranavanodidavarellaru purvadabattegolgadarallade!! Purvada karmava haridu puratanaranaridudilla.!! Entivarellaru charasheshava lingakkarpisalariyaragi!! Evarige lingavu kanisdendata namma Ambigara Choudayya.!!SVS6/253/242*

102. *Vedavanoduvarella banjeya makkalu!! Shastravanoduvarella suleya makkalu!! Puranava heluvarella kuntalagittiya makkalu!! Agamava noduvarella harutiya makkalu!! Tarkava nodi heluvarella!! Vaidyagaratiya makkalu.!! Entee vedagamashastrapurana!! Tarkatantrangalella keli aacharisuvarella!! Dombajatakartiya makkalu.!! Entappa jadamati vratabhrusta muulaholeyarige !! Bhavabhandana enduu hingadu muktidoradu!! Entavara punnyakke adhikarigalada Brahma Vishnu Rudra!! Modalada devategalige munnave bhavahingadu!! Muktidoradu endanayya nimma Sharana!! Kadanolagada shankarapriya channakadambalinga!! Nirmayaprabhuve.!!SVS12/263*

103. *Chhala beku Sharanage para dhanavanollenemba!! Chhala beku Sharanage para satiyanollenemba!! Chhala beku Sharanage para daivavanollenemba!! Chhala beku Sharanage Linga Jangama vondemba!! Chhala beku Sharanage prasada ditavemba!! Chhalavilladavara meccha Kudala Sangamadeva !! SVS1/677, V of B 676*

Sharana) is different. How it means one should come out of gender feel, one should come out of the feel of eat and wear, I am saluting the *Sharana* who overcome from doubts of this world. O lord Kudala Chenna Sangamadeva."

Rather than pondering over *Veda*, *Shastra*, *Purana* and other types of knowledge, it is better to offer body (*Tanu*), mind (*Mana*), money (*Dhana*) to *Guru*, *Linga*, *Jangama* respectively. An order in the form of *Vachana*. By Sharana Urilinga Peddi, states that: - "What is the meaning of listening to *Veda*? He may be considered as *Veda* expert, not devotee (*Bhakta*). What is the meaning of listening to *Shastra*? He may be considered as great expert of *Shastra*, not devotee (*Bhakta*). What is the

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meaning of reading and listening to *Purana*? He may be considered as Puranic, not devotee (*Bhakta*). What is the meaning of reading and listening to *Agama*? He may be considered as Agamika, not devotee (*Bhakta*). What is the meaning of reading and listening to all these knowledges? He may become a self possessor by preaching at face, not devotee. He may be considered as religious (*Dharmi*) by practicing religion because of threat of *Yama*, not devotee. He may become enjoyer of *swarga* (heaven), not devotee (*Bhakta*). That's why so Devotee who having mentality of offering body (*Tan*), mind (*Manna*), wealth (Dhana) to *Guru Linga Jangama*. God Parashiva is said to be the devotee body, as he considers body of devotee as his own body. It is said to be the great personality who has *Linga*, I will consider him as Truth worthy (*Sathya*), and person attain the salvation *(Mukta), Jangama, Prasadi* and great achiever *(Parama sukhi)* Personality having these characters is considered as a great devotee."

Everything proposed in every *Veda*, *Agama*, *Shastra* and *Puranas* is available in *Vachana* literature. But the contents of *Vachana* literature are not at all found in any of the *Veda*, *Agama*, *Shastra* and *Purana*. The practical experience hidden in the *Vachana* literature is beyond the reach of *Veda*. A *Vachana* of Balasangayya son of *Guru* Basaveshwara explains: "The experience of *Vachana* literature contains, the concept of all *Veda*, *Agama Shastra Purana, but* the experience of *Vachana* Can not be found in *Veda,* The experience of *Vachana* is, beyond the perception *Veda Agama*. The *Vachana* experience concerns, No where the *Vedas,* Beyond, O Lord."

104. *Yogadindaridehenembiri, odinindaridihenembiri,!! Vedadindaridihenembiri, shastradindaridihenembiri,!! Keliranna, yogadindantu alla. Odinadantuu alla,!! Vedadantu alla, Shastradantu alla, sharansthala bere,!! Adentendade: gandalidu hennagabeku, hennalidu gandagabeku,!! Unduttenemba hangalidu, E lokada sondehavalida sharanange!! Namo nmao enutirenayya!! Basavapriya Koodalchannabasavanna.!! SVS3/1016*

105. *Vedavanodi kelidadenu? Vedajnanappanallade bhaktanalla,!! Shastragalanodi kelidaenu? Mahashastrajnanappanallade bhaktanalla,!! Puranavanodi kelidadenu? Puranikanappanallade bhaktanalla,!! Agamagalanodi kelidadenu? Agamikanappanallade bhaktanalla,!! Intee sarva vidyangalanodi kelidadenu? !! Edira bhodisi udara horevea udaraposhakanappanallade bhaktanalla,!!*

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Yamabhadeganji dharmava madidade dharmiyappanallade bhaktanalla,!! Swarga bhogiyappanallade bhaktanalla,!! Edu karana !! Shriguru linga jangamakke!! Tanu mana dhana arpisuva bhaktiyullade!! Bhakta dehika deva paasrasivanu!1 'Bhaktakaya mamakaya' endudagi,!! 'Lingalingi mahajivi' endudagi!! Entappa mahabhaktiyualla bhaktana !! Satyanembe, muktnembe.!! Jangamavembe, prasadiyembe, paramasukhiembenu.!! Urilinga Peddipriya Vishweshwara.!! SVS6/1451/277

106. *E vachananubhavadallullarthavu!! Sakalavedagama Shastra puranangalalli untu noda!! E vachananubhavadallarthavu!! Sakalavedagama Shastra puranangalalli ella noda!! Sakalavedagama Shastra puranangaligu nilukadu noda!! Sakalavedagama Shastra puranangaligatitavu noda!! Apramana koodalasangamadeva.!! Vedakke vareya kattuve V no 66/page no 21-22*

Vachana literature has very good standards compared to *Purana*, *Yoga* and Gayatri hymns. A proposal of critical comparison through *Vachana* literature presented by Siddarameshwara. "Vyasa *Purana* is no match, For one of our *Vachanas* when told; The sacrifice of a hundred *Rudras*, No match for the study of a hundred-odd, Of our *Vachanas*; The recitation of a hundred thousand Gayatris, No match for a thousand fold recitation of, Our *Vachana*,, O Kapila Sidda Mallikarjuna!"

Those of the having belief in *Veda* as god, *Shastra* as God, *Purana* as god, Rock as god, Wood as God, and Metal as God and all those worshipping doubts died of without knowing the reality. A crystal clear clarification from the president (chairperson) of the *Anubhava Mantapa* is given in the following *Vachana* "Few say *Veda* the God and Shastra the God, Few say *Purana* the God, the rock the God, Few say Wood the God and metal the god. Such few people died away worshipping the doubts Alas! All animals are logicians unaware of this matter, Sceptics unaware of their fathers., Earth created body; air created mind, The invisible created the Rock, the wood, The air based, the wind united stand by the order, The eyes closed at the endless world, There be a formless state of mind, smeared in it, open eyes see an absolute vacuity, There is darkless, brightless, an absolute space, Guheshwara".

A record milestone of victory of profounding and practice of the ethics by *Guru* Basaveshwara. "Hark you upon this ninepart earth, on jumbo isle, the words of these two: The word 'I will slay' is the gods'; the word 'I will win' is the devotees'! Mark you, Kudala Sangama Lord; the

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real devotees have won, by drawing the sword of Truth!"

At present also we can realize the denial of the *Vedic* authority over the *Lingayaths*. "*Vachana* cannot be compared to Upanishads. *Vachanas* are the true sources to know and show the ultimate reality" (Hiremalluru Eshwaran, 1997: 177).

Dana --- Dashooha

Dana is the popular way to contribute to the disabled persons and the poor people of the society. It is the measure of providing some facilities to the needy. *Dana* is complementary and a matter of willingness of *Data* (donor). It is being forced as compulsory because of efforts of preachers to wards the salvation.

107. Emmavachanadondu parayanakke!! Vyasanadondu Purana samabaradayya.!! Emma Vachanada norentaradhayanakke!! Shatarudri (yayaga) sama baradayya.!! Emma vachanada sasira parayanakke!! Gayatree laksha japa sama baradayya.!! SVS4/1613, V of S 856

108. Veda daivavendu nudivaru, Shastra daivavendu nudivaru,!! Purana daivavendu nudivaru, kallu daivavendu nudivaru,!! Kastha daivavendu nudivaru, pancahaloha daivavendu nudivaru,!! Evarella sakaladallada sandehavane pujisi sattu hodaralla!!! Samastha pranigaluu-tayanariyada tarkigalu,!! Tandeyanariyada sandehigalu.!! Tanu prathviyindalayittu, mana vayuvinidayittu,!!Kallu kashta-sakal nishkaladindayittu,!!Vayu adharada pavana samyogada anahata chakradinda melanaAgna chakradalli nindu !! Ananata koti brahmandagala metti kayada kanna muchhi,!! Gnada kanna teredu nodalke.!! Alli ondu nirakara untu.!! A nirakaradalli nindu nirnayisi nodalke,!! Alli ondu nishunny untu,!! A nishunnyadalli nindu nischayisi nodalke,!! Kattaleyalla, belagalla bachhabariya bayalu guheshwara! !!SVS2/1532

109. Jamboodvipa navakhanda prithiviyolage!! Kelirayya erdalin bhasheya!! Koluvenomba bhashe devandu, !! geluvenemba bhashe bhaktanadu,!! Satyavemba kooralgane kledukondu!! Sadbhaktaru geddaru kana Kudal Sangamadeva!! SVS1/678

Every Lingayath should contribute some part of his earning to the society is nothing but Dashooha. *Dashooha* is a mandatory duty of every *Linga*yath. The concept of *Dashooha* is the only way for salvation. In *Dashooha* there are three types -

- *Tanu Dashooha*
- *Mana Dashooha* &

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- *Dhana Dashooha.*

A *Lingayath* should offer his body *(Tanu) to the preceptor, and* mind *(Mana) to Linga* and wealth/money (*Dhana*) to the Jangama as *Dashooha.*

It is considered as *Dashooha* only when one earn by means of one's own *Kayaka* (work) and it must be thorough a fair deal. Wealth offered to *Dashooha* is the societies claim; individual claim is not entertained. If it is utilized for the betterment of personal self, then it cannot be recognized as *Dashooha*. Proper usage of fund offered as *Dashooha* is the responsibility of *Dasohi* (the person offering *Dashooha*). He should enquire and satisfy utilization before offering it. Serving a virtual Jangama of moral deed is an example of *Dashooha*.

All round development of personality is hidden in *Dashooha*. One may achieve physical health through *Tanu Dashooha*, improve the self spiritually and achieve mental improvement and bliss through offering *Mana* (mind) to *Linga* i.e., through meditation, and by spending part of his wealth in improving the society one is going to became a world human through offering *Dhana* (money) to *Jangama* (society). Most important thing is that, one must earn money in lawful way to offer as *Dashooha* other wise it may not considered as *Dashooha*.

Dashooha is a perfect way to purify deeds, personal development, clear understanding of religion and society and also universal welfare.

Dana is the property related to person and society. The persons who accept *Dana* are eminent personalities of forward caste. *Dana* may be used for the betterment of individual self. And that may be sold if necessary, or transferred to successors.

As *Dashooha* is offered in three ways first one is *Tanu Dashooha;* the work done by the body, *Mana Dashooha*; Use of the will power and offering presented in the form of thought and etc done by Mind. And the finally *Dashooha* offered in terms of *Dhana* cash. Out of these three the first two are not at all transferable to any body. And money or wealth anything offered as *Dashooha* to the society is not admitted to personal use. "Material offered as *Dashooha* can't be sold, and can not be transferred to successors" (Hiremalluru Eshwaran, 1997: 79-80).

Upanayana --- Deekshe

Initiation/consecration is a mandatory fundamental formality for

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religious fellowship. Based on consecration and of prescribed practices only one is being identified (considered) as follower of particular religion, faith, doctrine or philosophy.

Through *Upanayana/Munji* one may adopt the Hinduism. *Janivar* is the identity of a religious consecration in Hinduism. Hinduism has type of bifurcation and named after *Varnas*. Society is being divided into four categories (*Varnas*) namely *Brahmana*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya* and *Shoodra*. Out of these four *Varnas*, only three *Brahmana*, *Kshatriya* and *Vaishyas* only are allowed to have consecration. And within these three, *Brahmana* occupies highest position. *Shoodra* the working class is the lowest and is being excluded from all the religious rights, as they are not fit (unable) to adopt consecration.

Istalinga Deekshe is consecrational theme of *Linga*yath. *Istalinga* is the symbol of God. And it is the first and foremost important theme of the *Lingayath* religion.

Guru Basaveshwara is the resourceful personality to introduce *Istalinga.* He is the Pioneer at the *Lingayath* principle. Evidence in the form of *Vachana* by Siddarameshwara "You came as a *Guru.* To give a initiation unto me; You came as a *Linga* , To purge my heart of sin; You came as *Jangama,* To cleanse this worldly flesh, And raise it to its highest reach., O Kapil Sidda Mallikarjuna, Basaveshwara, as all these, Offered me grace and saved me; Henceforth there's naught for me , Higher than this!"

Deekshe is the process by which worldly life will be lost and converted in to spiritual life. And through it union with supreme is achieved very easily. Akkamahadevi, "O *Guru* who, erasing mortal birth, Hast deified my life; O *Guru* who, untying the bonds of birth, Hast shown to me the supreme Bliss; O *Guru* who, effacing every trace, That clings to worldlings, hast, Made me reputed as a devotee; O *Guru* who hast brought and placed, Chenna Mallikarjuna in my hands, I bow to Thee!"

Channabasavanna *says that Deekshe* is being given in the early age; Let us see the senselessness thought religious consecration not given to children before attaining the majority:" I tell them violators of procedure (*Vratagedi*), As the addicted to eat along with their mother father, O Lord Kudala Chenna Sangamadeva."

It is commonly argued that "*Janivar*" bifurcates male, and female in *Brahmins*. *Istalinga* is uniformly used to women and men and all caste,

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creed people (Hiremalluru Eshwaran, 1997: 151). *Upanayana* is restricted to only *Brahman*, *Kshatriya* and *Vaishya Varnas*. All the religious privileges are made limited to the males of these three groups only. Females and majority of the population such as working classes, suppressed categories of labors, untouchables are considered as *Shoodras* , they are denied of the chance to enter in to the religion. Where as in Lingayathism every one is being welcomed whole heartedly to enter into the religion without any discrimination. Let us refer a Vachana of Guru Basaveshwara "Let them not say, O Lord, 'whose is he, whose, O whose?' Let them say rather, 'He is ours, He's ours, he's ours! O Kudala Sanagama Lord, let me be a son of Thine own house!"

110. *Guruvagi bandeange deeksheya madidiri,!! Lingavagi bandenna manada malinava kalediri,!! Jangamavagi bandenna prapanchakatanava kaledu parma seemeya madidiri.!! Intivellavu basavannanagi enage !! Prasadava nidi saluhida kapilasiddamallikarjuna!! Ennenagatishayvenu illa.!! SVS4/1311 V of S 414*

111. *Narajanma todedu hara janmava madidaguruve namo namo.!! Bhava bandhanava bidisi paramasukhava torida guruve namo,!! Bhavi embuda todedu bhakte endenisida guruve namo'!! Chennaliikarjunana tandenna!! Kaivashakke kotta guruve nfmo namao.!! SVS5/279 V of A 57*

112. *Huttida makkalu prabuddaradallade lingasvayatava!! Madabardomba yuktishunnyara nodire,!! Alupi tayi tande avarodanundade!! Avaranacha vratagediglembe Koodalachennasangayya.!! SVS3/187*

113. *Evnarava, evanarava, evanaravanendenisadirayya.Eva nammava, eva nammava eva nammavanendenisayya.Kudalasangamadeva, Nimma mahamaneya maganendenisayya.!! SVS1/62V of B 62.*

Through a very simple and important procedure called as Istalinga Deekshe (consecration of Istalinga), Lingayathism accepts working classes, suppressed people, low caste people as Lingayaths.

Casteism --- Socialism

Discrimination on the basis of birth within the race is considered as Casteism. From ancient time the Casteism is being in force at Hinduism. Where as in Lingayathism there is no caste discrimination the person who wear Istalinga is considered absolutes equal to all other Istalinga wearers i.e., Lingayaths.

Casteism and discrimination based on caste are still alive in contemporary Hindu society. It is indeed supported and encouraged by

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the upper classes. We can refer an example, which meant Swamy Harshanada in his book "Hinduism in the form of Question and answer" specifies that "Casteism helps to stop unhealthy competition; it promotes development One has to learn profession of his caste" (Harshananda, 1993: 30). He gave this answer as a means to clear the doubt of common man with the intention of propagating Hinduism.

Caste discrimination is being supported by responsible personalities rather to restrict it. Efforts for eradicate, resolve caste barrier and restriction of discriminations between human being are being disqualified by dignities. Empowering the Casteism is being in force based on Hindu scriptures. However at the contemporary scenario Hindu rites are losing their hold over the society. "At present only two Gruhastha and Sanyasa Ashram exist. *Varna* system is completely eradicated and mingled in the ocean of caste" (Harshananda, 1993: 37). Out of the four *Ashrams Brahmacharya* and *Vaanaprastha* are exhausted, whereas the Casteism grabbed *Varna* system.

One can find so many instances of restrictions are resolved by denying Casteism. To overrule the caste barrier marriage between different castes is the easiest way. But inter caste marriages are denied in the prelude mindset by pointing out the future of the children born are uncertain. This inferiority is developed only in Hindu culture. "Marriage to same caste provides help at needed time, unifies the same caste people, and promotes to get cooperation of blood relations at sorrowful situations" (Harshananda, 1993: 34).

Prevailing Casteism is the root cause of selfish and thoughtless people. Nowadays Casteism is causing havoc tyrannical role in the society. On reviving the history Casteism has hurt a lot the Indian society and is harmed the lower caste people till to date.

No one can deny that Christians are providing various facilities such as Education, Medical service, Employment and Community services to the remote and difficult rural areas. Muslims are indulged in unifying their community. They are keenly interested in spreading the Islam. Some of them are treat converting a non-Muslim person into Muslim. (It is misguided as conversion of non-Muslims into Muslim is Jihad) Jihadi volunteers lead to convert the masses by force and terror. It is generally everyone is aware that the Jihadi volunteers are threatening the world.

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"Differentiations and inferior mentality of the Hindu society are the cause of attracting people towards conversion." It is natural that the Dalits and *Shoodras* are interested in conversion because of the ill treatment at Hinduism.

114. Shantveer Swamiji Seers of Koolur mutt expressed the notion, "Speaking, at the program. "Prajavani" Kannada Daily news paper. Dated 27th January, 2007.

One can notice the fact that the poor masses were attracted and still attracted towards Christianity. By referring to the history of India Muslims got majority of followers by force. (i.e., the Islam in India is spread on the strength of sword)

People other than Hindus are not bifurcating by caste. To overcome the problem of inferiority and superiority, untouchability and etc mental torture the suppressed people (*Shosita*) are attracted towards other religions.

Non-resident Indians comment to a survey conducted by BBC channel; that "We are proud to be Indian, but Casteism in India is cause of regress."

Lingayath is the religion where Casteism has no place at all. Let us refer to the evidences, *Guru* Basaveshwara, "Clinging to caste, you seek impurities: you look for darkness, cling to light, Why you, you silly man! You claim to be superior by your caste: Is there any benefit, by a hundred billion priests? The saying goes, "the devotee, Is the crest jewel". Do but believe, in the transmuting feet, of our Kudala Sangama's Sharana. And save yourself from ruin, man!"

Lingayaths opposes Casteism. It has revolutionary ethics, encourages democratic ideology and equality. Here preference is to the achievement and not to birth. *Lingayaths* deny caste system, Sacrifice and offering of animals. *Lingayathism* condemns Hindu (*Brahman)* as Male oriented society; Remarriage of widows is admissible in *Lingayathism* (Hiremalluru Eshwaran, 1997: 137, 143, 152).

Where the Lingayathism is religion which belongs to each and every of its follower; of every body of any caste, creed, race. As a person following the Lingayathism is the ruler of the religion. As we studied the role of Anubhava Mantapa in chapter III, the Sharana Sharanes from all the directions of the world arrived at Kalyana. Among them Molege

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Marayya couple arrived to Kalyana from Kashmir by letting out their Kingdom. Marayya was a King at Kashmir; Mrula Shankara Deva arrived from the territory nowadays identified as Afghanistan.

If we go through the achievements of Anubhava Mantapa *Lingayathism* is indeed formed by the Sharanas Sharanes, members of Anubhava Mantapa, the followers of the *Lingayathism*. Most of the common mean such as wood cutters, sweepers, washer mans, animal keeper, manual labors, wrote mystical aspects in their Vachana. Presently world humanitarian, scientific, socialistic, progressive, Lingayathism is the product of all the Sharana Sharanes. By over viewing the above discussion and achievements of Anubhava Mantapa; we may be convinced to consider Lingayathism as a Socialistic religion.

Worship of Deity, Idol --- Istalinga

Generally, motif of welfare surrendering the superior, saluting the omnipotent is idea behind worship. Hindus worship various deities such as Shiva, Vishnu, Rudra, Kali, Durga, etc are in force. Commonly worship of deities is being considered as devotion. Where as in Lingayathism; worship of Istalinga (the symbolic manifestation of the formless God) is being in force.

115. *Survey on Non-resident Indians, conducted by BBC channel., "Prajavani" daily, dated 6th February 2007.*

116. *Jativididu sustakavanarasuve!! Jyotivididu kattaleyanarasuve!! Edeko marulu manava? jatialli adhikanembe! !! Vipra shatakotigaliddalli phalaveno?!! 'Bhaktane Shikhamani' endudu Vachana!! Namma Kodala Sangana Sharnara Padaparushava nambu!! Kedabeda manave.!! SVS1/595 Vof B 594*

Imran Nazer Hosein specifies in his book *Islam and Buddhism in the modern world*, "India was (and still is) steeped in idol-worship and in the worship of thousands of gods and goddesses, the revision from such rank polytheism, naked anthropomorphism and animistic idolatry to a monotheism might have been too sudden step. Perhaps it was necessary that the slate be first wiped clean" (Imran Nazer Hosein, 2001: 10).

The Avataras (Incarnations) of deities are not accepted by *Lingay*athism. Incarnations of gods are not equivalent to the formless God. *Guru* Basaveshwara asks" What is model at eating pig by *Vishnu* in

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the incarnation of *Varaha* (Pig)? What is model at eating fish by *Vishnu* in the incarnation of *Matshya* (fish)? What is model at eating tortoise by *Vishnu* in the incarnation of *Kurma (*tortoise)? What is model at eating deer by *Vishnu* in the incarnation of *Harina* (deer)? Though they ate unknowingly, yet after knowing four *Vedas*, sixteen *Shastras*, eighteen *Puranas*, twenty eight *Agamas*, through reading, listening to all above, what is the model at eating Goat by offering at Homa? This way of *Shruti* is to be realized through whole world. Let the tailed germs be poured into the mouth of those who tell sub-deities are equivalent to our Lord." Thought provoking instances from the Hindu scriptures are being critically discussed in the above Vachana. On applying simple logic one cannot assume and accept the instances like pig was eaten by a pig, deer was eaten by deer, tortoise was eaten by tortoise. Here in the Vachana provokes incarnation cannot be accepted because of their inconsistency.

Hindus worship the fallacy rather than the reality. "Some how it is said *Veda* as God, some how it is said *Shastra* as God. Some how it is said *Purana* as God, some how it is said Rock as God. Some how it is said wood as God, some how it is said mixture of five metals (Pancha Loha) as God. All these were dead through worshipping doubts of nature! All the animals are logicians, who don't know their mother, doubtists who don't know their father. Body is created from Earth, mind is created from Air. Rock-wood were created from indivisible, based on air union with wind standing at Anga chakra the upper place of amanita chakra, seen through the eyes of knowledge. There is a state of formlessness. By standing at the formless if seen with decision, there is an absolute vacuity. By standing at absolute vacuity if seen with firmness, there is state of non-darkness, non-brightness; it's an absolute space."

Guru Basaveshwara explains in his *Vachana* that offering to Idol worship. "Seeing a snake of stone, they say: 'Pour milk, do!' seeing a real snake, they say: 'Kill it!' If a *Jangama* who can

117. *Vishnu Varahavataradalli Handiya timbuvadavacharavo?!! Vishnu matshyavataradalli meenum timbuvadavacharvo?!! Vishnu Kuurmavataradalli Ameya timbuvadavacharvo?!! Vishnu Hairnavataradalli eraleya timbuvadavacharvo?!! Intivanella ariyade tindaru.!! Aridaridu nalku Veda, Hadinaru Shastra,!! Hadinentu Purana, Ippattentagama!! Evellavanodi, keli, Homavanikki Hotana kondu*

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timbudavachardolago?!! Inti shrutigala vidhiya jagavella nodire.!! Namma Koodalasangamadevange!! Adhidevategala sariembavara bayiyalli suriyave!! Balahulugalu?!! SVS1/1352

118. *Veda daivavendu nudivaru, Shastra daivavendu nudivaru,!! Purana daivavendu nudivaru, kallu daivavendu nudivaru,!! Kastha daivavendu nudivaru, pancahaloha daivavendu nudivaru,!! Evarella sakaladallada sandehavane pujisi sattu hodaralla! !!Samastha pranigaluu-tayanariyada tarkigalu,!! Tandeyanariyada sandehigalu.!! Tanu prathviyindalayittu, mana vayuvinidayittu,!! Kallu kashta-sakal nishkaladindayittu,!! Vayu adharada pavana samyogada anahata chakradinda melanaAgna chakradalli nindu !! Ananat koti brahmandagala metti kayada kanna muchhi,!! Gnanada kanna teredu nodalke.!! Alli ondu nirakara untu.!! A nirakaradalli nindu nirnayisi nodalke,!! Alli ondu nishunnyauntu,!! A nishunnyadalli nindu nischayisi nodalke,!! Kattaleyalla, belagalla bachhabariya bayalu Guheshwara! !! SVS2/1532*

eat food arrives', they say 'Away!' And serve their dainties to a *Linga that* cannot eat! If you make little of, our Kudala Sanga's Sharanas, you will be as a clod, knocking against a stone." *Guru* Basaveshwara criticizes superstitions of idol worship in a very effective way. In the name of worship so many are offering milk to stone Idol of snake. In south India there is festival called "*Naga Panchami*". On that day women worship and offer milk to Idols of snake (statue of snake). Whereas, if they see real snake, then they wish to kill it. Similarly if a *Jangama* comes, then they send him back. Whereas "*Linga*" which cannot eat is offered a "*Naivaidhya*". These meaningless actions are criticized by *Guru* Basaveshwara. Making disregard, ignorance towards the "*Sharana*" will prove as what happens to the clod when hit to the stone. Overall opinion of this *Vachana* proves that Idol worship is absolutely wrong. Instead of wasting valuable foodstuff in the name of worship are used to help needy persons. Otherwise our existence will vanish automatically, as clod hit to the stone will perish.

Worship of deity and idols is not practiced. By Bahuroopi Choudayya "Known *Vedas* were stand said and burnt. Achieved *Shastras* were escaped by ego *(So-hum)* Education faceted letter prefixed to God in *Veda (Pranama)* is Telling itself as 'achiever, achiever' in the way of thief's hesitation the beauty of semi-male-female God (*Ardhanarishwara*). Has become famous in this world. Our god does not

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have Plait (decoration of ladies long hair) Our God doesn't decorates hair with flower and etc., (*Mudi*) Our God does not have two wives. For our God there is nobody to tell elegance (*Bedagu)* they are searching because is not available in sound. The grace/novelty cached at mid-part of lunch bowl of sound. In the body devotee who offered it and shown it by run the novelty. The endless *Linga* has been made definite and shown by, Rekanna priya Naginath, the world has been survived by the both."

God is only one. He may be called by many names, and so a devotee should have only one aim, like faithful wife only to serve his husband. *Guru* Basaveshwara "God is but one, many His names; the faithful wife knows but one lord; should she fall for another man, He chops her nose and ears! Should I, O Kudala Sangama Lord. Regard them as the sort that eats, the crumbs of several gods?"

The age old elders can not be recognized without superiority in thought and practice. Allama Prabhu "Look the elders who are not the beginners (Adhyaralla), nor achievers (Vedhyaralla), not having target (Sadhyaralla) See at the elders having unhealthy-body, unhealthy-

119. *Kalla nagar kandarehalanere embaru!! Ditada nagara kandare kollembarayya!! Umba jangama bandare nade embaru !! Unnada lingakke bonava hidiyuvaru!! Namma koodala Sangana sharanara kandu udasina madidare !! Kalla tagida mitteyantipparayya!! SVS1/194 V of B 194*

120. *Vedhisida vedangalu uridulidu nindavu!! Sadhisida shastrangalella soho endadagidavu,!! Vidyamukha pranamavu sidda sidda endu!! Kadda kallarante tadavadisuttirdavunoda,!! Ardhanarishwarana rupu entendu!! Shuddhavayitte lokadolage,!! Jade ella emma devange, mudiella emma devange,!! Madadiayribbarilla emma devange,!! Bedaga nudivarilla, nudiyalammada karana arsuttiddaaru, !! Edeya madyadalli nudiya nungida bedaga hiditandu!! Arpitava madi; nadesi torida bhaktara tanuvinolage !! Kadeyillada lingava khanditava maditorida !! Rekannapriya Naginath, ebbarinda baduttikitee lokavella.!! SVS8/178/53*

121. *Divanobba nama halavu!! Parama pativrategе gandanobba!! Mattondakkeragidade kivi muga koyvanu!! Halavudaivada enjala timbuvaranenembe!! Kudalasangamadeva. !! SVS1/615 V of B 613*

mind, unhealthy-sensation, they comment seriously about the persons having knowledge of *Shiva* ethics. Those are the Karmi's who don't know the Guheshwara (reality)."

True concept of God by "The region behind the earth (Patala) this

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side, foots are below that. Ten directions are this side, ten-should erasure that sided, Universe is this side, face is that side, Lord Chenna Mallikarjun, you became symbolic to come to my palm stage." "Thy wideness is the wideness of the world, the wideness of the firmament, Ay, wider still; Thy feet go deeper then the underworld, (Patala) Ay, deeper still. They crown is higher then *Brahma*'s egg, Ay, higher still. Thou Linga, who art imperceptible, past understanding and beyond compare, didn't shrink to the dimensions of a peak when coming to my palm, O Kudala Sangama Lord!"

Worshipping the Bhuta is not at all worthy *Guru* Basaveshwara "O sir, wherever they see water, they dip in it; O sir, wherever they see a tree, they circle it! O Kudala Sangama Lord! How can they know thee, they who seek, Water that dries up and the withering tree?"

Person who takes birth cannot be considered as God. Allama Prabhu, "Man born with the body which got death, how can you to be told as God, if god has death then what is the difference between God and man? Separate world for gods (Deva loka), world for living beings (Marthu looka), For Guheshwara there is no any world exist.

The man born in this world is sure to die one day or the other."

God is beyond creation, sustainance and dissolution. God need not take birth. *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Rudra* are born to womb, how they considered being God. *Guru* Basaveshwara "He's Indra who was born, of Amrutavati and Somashambhu! He's *Brahma* who was born, of Satyarusi and Jyestadevi; He is *Vishnu* who was born, of Vasudava and Devaki; He is Enlightened who was born, of Nabhiraja and Marutadevi! The three worlds know all these, were womb-born; but, if Lord Kudala Sanagama, who is, beyond birth, existence, death, Had any father or mother, say!"

122. *Addyaralla veddyaralla, Saddyarallada hiriyara nooda!! Tanuvikara, manavikara, indriyavikarada hiriayara nooda!! Shivachinte shivagnanigala kandade alvadi nudivaru!! Guheshwaranariyada karmigalu!! SVS2/129*

123. *Patalavittitta, padangalattatta,!! Dashadikku ettitta, dashabhujangalattatta,!! Brahmanandavittittta, manimakutavattatta,!! Chennamallikarjunayya!! Nivenna karastalakke bandu chulukadiralla lingave,!! SVS5/279*

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124. *Jagadagala mugilagala migeyagala nimmagala,!! Pataladindattata nimma sricharana,!! Brahmandadindveattatta nimma shrimakuta,!! Agammya agochara apratima lingave kudalasangamadevayya,!! Enna karsthalakke bandu chulukadirayya!! SVS1/744 V of B 742*

125. *Neera kandalli muluguvrayya,!! Marana kandalli suttuvarayya,!! Battuva jalava, vanaguva marana !! Mechidavaru nimmanetta ballaru?!! Kudalasangamadeva. !! SVS1/580 Vof B 579*

126. *Aaga hutti bega sava kayagonda manava!! Ni devarensikombudondu aavudu antara hela?!! Devaru savade, devrigu savarigu aaudantara hela?!! Devarige devaloka, Manavarige marthya loka,!! Guheshwara allayange ennava lookavu ella.!! SVS2/503 SVS2/503*

127. *Amratmati somashabhuvige huttidatanindra,!! Satyarushi jeshathadevige huttidata Brahma,!! Vasudeva Devakige huttidata Vishnu,!! Nabhiraja Marutadevige huttidatanaruha!! Evarellaru yonijarembudeatraijagaballudu,!! Utpatti stiti pralayakke horgada Koodalasangamadevange !! Matapitrugalullade heliroo! !! SVS1/545 V of B544*

So it clearly specifies the concept of God. Lingayathism is indeed found to overcome practice of the worship of worthless idols, Deity. Bhuta Puja, And honoring age old elders without having qualities (Virtues); and impose the worship supreme reality, formless God, Creator, Sustainer, Dissolver in the form of Istalinga only.

Worship through mediator --- Person

Worshipping of the God is measure of offering emotion. Whereas in Hinduism most of the Pujas (worship) are performed by mediator. How ever in Lingayathism considers devotee as wife and God as husband. There must not be any mediator during the worship of wife and husband.

Priests believe that there is a God, but this God can be approached and known only through them. People can enter the Holy of the Holiest only with the permission of the priests. You must pay them, worship them, and place everything in their hands. Through the history of the world, the priestly tendency has cropped up again and again-This tremendous thirst seems to be a part of human nature. The priests dominate us. They wrap simple truths in round about ways. They tell us stories to support their own superior position (Vivekananda 2001: 36-74). In India, priesthood, like every other business in a social life, is a hereditary profession. A priest's son will become a priest, just as a carpenter's son will become a carpenter, or a blacksmith's son a blacksmith.

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The lives of the *Brahmanas*, the hereditary Priesthood of India, are very much circumscribed. Society has no faith in the Priesthood, who, instead of keeping the Shikha, part their hair, who give up their ancient habits and ancestral customs, clothe themselves in semi-European dress, and adopt the newly introduced usages, of the West, in a hybrid fashion.

Priest craft is the bane of India. Can man degrade his brother and himself and escape degradation? Can one injure anyone without injuring himself? The mass of *Brahmana* and *Kshatriya* tyranny has recoiled upon their own heads with compound interest; and a thousand years of slavery and degradation is what the inexorable law of *Karma* is visiting them.

The upper classes torturing the lower! Is it a religion that fails to remove the misery of the poor and turn man into gods! Ours is only "Untouchability". Only "Touch me not". Touch me not" Good heaves! A country. The big leaders of which of which have for the last two thousand years been only discussing whether to take food with the right hand or the left, whether to take water from the right hand side of left, . If such a country does not go to ruin what other will? A country where millions of people lie on flowers of the Mohuna plant and a million or so of *Brahmana* suck the blood of these poor people, without even the least effort for their amelioration- is that a country or hell is that a religion or the devil's dance? My brother here is one thing for you to understand fully; I have travelled all over India, and seen this country too-can there is an effect without cause? Can there be punishment without sin?

Sitting down these hundreds of years with an ever-increasing load of crystallized superstition on your heads, for hundreds of year spending all our energy upon discussing the touchable ness or untouchableness of this food or that, with all humanity crushed out of you by the continues social tyranny of ages-what are you? . Come, be men! Kick out the priests who hinder the progress. Their hearts would never become rich. They are the offspring of centuries of superstition and tyranny. Root out priest craft first. Come, be men! Come out of your narrow holes and have a broad out look see how nations are on march! A race of downtrodden, you lose your caste if you come out of it!

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Worship through mediator is not at all accepted by the God. An evidence of *Vachana* by *Guru* Basaveshwara "Indulging in love, eating one's food- Is that ever done by deputy! Oneself one ought to do, all *Linga*'s rites and ceremonies; it's never done by deputy... O Kudala Sanagma, How can they know thee, Lord, Doing it for mere formality?"

Priest is ghost, person practicing *Brahminical* worships is not at all considered as *Linga*yath "O ritualists, you perform your rites, Claming, "I am devotee, I am , A maker of oblations": if you wash, A priest's feet with the hands, That touched Divinity and poured His bath-, It's *Linga*-water in your heart, And on the head, The water that was washed a *Brahmins* feet!, "He is a demon in a Brahmin's form, Who perpetrates the wicked deeds, The *Vedas* sanction; A butcher at the sacrificial post, An enemy of the peace." Therefore, O Kudala Sangama Lord, One cannot bear to see, the faces of such wicked ones!"

The priests in India, the *Brahmans*, possessed great intellectual and psychic powers. It was they who began the spiritual development of India, and they accomplished wonderful things. But the time came when the free spirit of development that had at first activated the *Brahmans*, disappeared. They began to monopolise powers and privileges to themselves. If a *Brahmana* killed a man, he would not be punished. The *Brahman*, by his very birth, is the Lord of the Universe! Even the wicked *Brahman* must be worshiped!

Priesthood is in its nature cruel and heartless. That is why religion goes down where Priesthood arises. Vedanta says we must give up the idea of privilege, and then only religion come up: otherwise there will be no religion at all.

Lingayathism denies the interference of third man in between the God and devotee.

Way of worship, Ritualistic --- Scientific

Generally in the name of religious worship many activities are going to happen in the society. Nobody think about the reasoning behind rituals and rites that which performed during the worship. In Hinduism many rituals and rites may not have meaning at all. Nobody will think about the virtualities of ritual. Even Gods are being created by common mans in day to day's life. In Lingayathism most of the rites and rituals are of scientific reasoning. Those are examined here.

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Physical body is to be made as the experimental theme and worshipped through realization. Allamprabhu "I made my body as garden mind as pickaxe, Removed the roots of delusion by excavating, Sowed the seeds of absolute reality by breaking the blocks of clod. Whole universe is the well, wind is the instrument to bring up the water from well (*Ratala*). Let water to desired place through artery (*Sushmna*), Fixed the fence of equality and patience to protect the crop from

128. *Tannashrayada rati sukhavanu, tanumba ootavanu!! Bere mattobbara kainda madisabahude?!! Tanna lingakke maduva nitya nemava ta madabekallade!! Bere mattobbara kaialli madisabahude?!! Kemmane upcharakke maduvarallade!! Nemmanetta ballaru, Kudalasangamadeva.!! SVS1/183 Vof B 183*

129. *Nanu bhakta nanu prasadi!! Vipra karmava maduve karmi,!! Lingadevana mutti majjanakkereva kayyalu!! Viprana kala tolevade!! Longodaka hridayadalli!! Viprna kala toleda neeru mandeya mele!!! Shruttyatkata durachari yagna koopashya: ghatakah!! Udrekena krate shante viprarupena rakshasha:!! Edu karana Kudalasangamadeva!! Entappa durachari gala muukhava nodalagadu!! SVS1/593 V of B 592*

animals called five senses, I guarded the child plant (*Sasi*) of the garden by become alert all the time, O lord Guheshwara."

To worship there is not at all need of physical structure are needed. One who has money may build the temple for *Shiva* but the complete involvement of the body and mind of a devotee is more meaningful than that of the worship of mere idols of the body has more meaning than that of worshiping the idols. Says Vishwa *Guru* Basaveshwara "Those who have money build, Temples for *Shiva*; what can build? A poor man, Lord, am I! My body is the shrine; its pillars are my legs, the golden pinnacle, my head. Here me, Kudala Sangama lord, there is destruction for what stands, But not for that which moves!"

Swami Vivekananda warns that the superstitions are the enemies as they are gradually killing the progress of our nation. Resource, time, money and many more important and essential commodities are being wasted in the name of religious ritual. "Superstition is a great enemy of man, but bigotry is worse" (Swami Vivekananda 2004: 11). It is better to think of own sense and adopt it in life and practice it, rather follow the rituals without reasoning. Rather than following the rituals without reasoning

The unique blend of external knowledge and the external activity

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will clear off the impurity of birth and the impurity of mind, Channabasavanna says "Eternal knowledge, external activity, Blended in Sharana, The impurity of body and mind is lost, All the senses be one with the Lord , Kudala Chenna Sangayya."

Conversion into the religion

Converting to the religion is the only way of survival of the religions. The religious consecration Hindus call it as Upanayana and Lingayaths call as Deekshe is mandatory to get introduced into the religion. In this section we are discussing various aspects about the consecration in accordance with both the religions.

In Hinduism authoritativeness of being is confirmed by the religious consecration called Upanayana. It is said to be a second birth. Because the person undergoing into the Upanayana will get a new birth after getting the religious rites.

Only way get enter into the religious consecration is that he must belonging to the Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, the forth Varna person i.e. Shoodra and women of all the four Varnas are not at all have right to have Upanayana.

Entry to the Varna in which he took birth only is admissible. If a person born in the Vaishya Varna is not at all allowed to Brahmana. As per scriptures there was no restriction to get

130. Tanuva tontava madi manva guddalimadi!! Agedu kaledenayya bhrantina bera Vadedu sansarada henteya, bagidu bittidenayya Brahma beejava!! Akhandamandalavemba bavi, pavanave ratala!! Sushumnanaladinda udakavatiddi !! Basavagalaidu hasanagedisihavendu !! Samte sairaneyemba beliyanikki!! Aavagalu e tontadalli jagaraviddu !! Sasiya salahidenu kana Guheshwara!! SVS2/1229

131. Ullavaru shivalaya maduvaru!! Nanena madali badavanayya!! Enna kale kambha dehave degula,!! Shira honna kalashavayya!! Kudalasangama Deva kelayya!! Sthavarkkalivuntu jangamakkalivilla.!! SVS1/821 Vol. B 820

132. Antarangada arivu, bahirangada kriye!! E ubhaya samputa ondada sharanange !! Hingittu tanusutaka, Hingittu mana sutaka !! Koodala Chenna sangayyanalli !! Sangavadudu sarvendriya !! SVS3/875

enter into any of the Varna based on ability of an individual. But in generally change Varna is not being allowed.

Consecration *(Deekshe)* is the only way to become *Linga*yath; no

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matter he may be or may not be a *Lingayath* by birth. In Hindu its intension is same but now it has become just a formality. *Guru* Basaveshwara "What if they be, my elder or my younger brother, my father of a member of my clan? Those who have no affinity with *Linga*, Refuse to own as mine, O Kudala Sangama Lord, This love of one's relations is arch-hell!" (V of B 713).

Being born to the parents of *Lingayath* is not at all a qualification to be considered as the follower of religion, Channabasavanna "Child born to an animal hindering at streets and animal of temple, Shall they become Basaveshwara? Without having the *Linga* consecration, Mare born to a devotee, did they become devotee, don't having *Linga* on the body. If they had been allowed in society, then the *Vachana* of Kudala Chenna Sangamadeva treats as devotion-less".

Caste discrimination is not fair within those of having *Istalinga Deekshe*; marital relation shall also being done in between children's. *Guru* Basaveshwara "What signifies what caste they be? He who has *Shiva Linga* is well born, Will you, once classes have been mixed, Look for their class in Sharanas? The class that's born of *Shiva*-that is faith;

Give up your bygone caste; For Uma is your mother, *Rudra* your sire, *Ishavara* is your only clan., Since this is so, whatever they give, At theirs, I take, give them my child, For I believe in your *Sharanas*, O Kudala Sangama Lord!"

Lingayathism whole heartedly welcomes everyone to become *Linga*yath without inquiring previous history caste, holy or evil birth, creed, community, whereas entry into Hinduism is difficult (Hiremalluru Eshwaran, K, 1997: 65).

Comments about Hinduism

Following the above comparison of the two religions with regard to their religious faiths, doctrines and social practices, let us draw some useful conclusions from these.

Hinduism left majority by denying religious right to women and low-caste. It is often observed that Hinduism denied religious rights to women who form half of the population and so called low caste people who form at least one fourth of the population. In this way religious rights are denied to majority of the population. The *Chaturvarnashrama system* is the contributor for the denial.

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133. *Anna, tamma, hettayya gotradavaradadenu?!! Lingasahityaralladavara ennavarennenayya,!! Nantu bhakti nayaka naraka,!! Koodalasangamadeva.!! SVS1/714*

134. *Beediya basavange, devalayada pashuvinge huttida karu,!! Basavagalappave, Lingamudreyanottadanakka?!! Bhaktange huttidenendare!! Bariya gurukarunyadalli bhaktarappare, angadamele lingavilladanakka?!! Avaranolagittukondu nadedare!! Bhaktihinarenisittu Koodalachennasanganavachana!! SVS3/186*

135. *Avakulvadadenu? Shivalingaviddavane kulajanu,!! Kulavanarsuvare sharanaralli, jatisankaranada balika?!! Shivadharmekulejatah: punrjanma vivarjitaha!Uma mata pita rudra ishvaryam kumevach:!! Endudagi,!! Ukkudakombenavaralli, kusa koduve,!! Koodalasangamadeva nambuve nemma sharanaranu.!! SVS1/718 V of B 717*

Idol worship and untouchability have contributed to the furtherance of the inequalities in the Hindu fold. Idol worship which resulted in building temples has segregated both God and a few sections of the people from the majority. Swami Vivekananda observes the condition and states that to the Hindu religion is in the kitchen, their God is the cooking-pot and their religion is 'Don't touch me.' In the same way untouchability which is being practiced denies the ethical concern for the other human beings.

Instead of treating all beings are our own, reading books alone will not be lead us to salvation Books and practices which cannot feed a hungry mouth cannot lead to salvation. How can those which become impure by the mere breath of people, can purify others? Basaveshwara considers touch me not attitude as a mental disease. He states, all expansion is life and all contraction is death; all love is expansion and all selfishness is contradiction. Love, therefore, is the only law of life.

Polytheism has become reason for bankruptcy in contemporary Indian society. The celebration of festivals enables the Hindu to lead a healthy and worthy life to fulfill the needs of individuals as well as the society. How ever "*Veda* denies polytheism." (Sudhakar Chaturvedi, 2004: 13) But we can notice the total confusion in common people at their practices, preferably in celebration observance of festivals. One can notice the extravagance in the celebrations of festivals. However *Vedas* intend to support monotheism but we find confusion regarding worship of Lightning, Sun, Fire, Earth, Water and other elements.

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Elevated souls are called *Devas* or divinities; these don't deserve worship. "Supreme spiritual being is only one and other divinities too exist" (Sudhakar Chaturvedi, 2004: 14, 17).

In general, majority of the mass does not have clear idea about absolute reality and the way of worship. One is following other without thinking. We may also find ignorance regarding the attainment of knowledge.

Comments about Lingayathism

On pursuing the present practices of the Lingayaths, it is noticed that, they are nervous in facing various difficulties and discrepancies, out of which the fallowing are taken up for present discussion. They are as follows. a) Suffering by lack of knowledge. b) Internal jealousy.

Lingayaths are suffering from lack of ethical knowledge. Some Seers/preachers preach religious ethics and majority of the followers don't have a clear concept of ethics related to the *Lingayath* religion.

But in the 15th century itself bifurcation of *Lingayathism* has been made into *Jangama, Guru* and *Veerakta* (Hiremalluru, Eshwaran, 1997: 161). Birth has become criterion to become *Jangama*. At the time of Basaveshwara *Jangama* was the one who indulged himself in duty of *Jangama* willingly and became so. But at present *Jangama* is one who takes birth in *Jangama* caste. Ladder types of classes were created by *Jangama* instead of eradicating it. Shivayoga Mandira has played a major role in dividing *Jangama* by giving education to only *Jangama* by birth (Hiremalluru Eshwaran, 1997: 162). Majority of the Lingayaths are suffering from lack of true knowledge of the religion. Now Lingayathism is entering into caste politics by trying to gain the benefit of reservation policy.

Lingayathism is suffering from internal jealousy. For instance, in 1997 when the preparations for releasing a Postal Stamp having portrait of Basaveshwara on Basava Panchami (demise day of Basaveshwara) were going on at Delhi, some of the prominent seers of Lingayathism have worked against the programme because of their jealousy. This has negative aspects on the growth of the religion. Instead propagating the unique features of Lingayathism, the seers quarrel among themselves for name and fame. For them their own home and some are significant than the popularity and growth of Lingayathism

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CONCLUSION

Religion should discover the path to express love and to become one with God. The world philosophies share the same ultimate truth which exists in everything; which never belongs to any one individual person or organization and at the same time belongs to all people alike. God belongs to Himself and to that person who, through devotion and understanding, strives to know Him and attain Him.

Yet, somehow this truth is seized upon by different sects and dogmatists who interpreted what is universal and transcendent. Into something small and limited. "Philosophers do not realize the instance of blind men trying to explain an elephant. through experience, each touching a part and describing it, according to his fancy, as a rope, or a broom, or a winnowing basket or a pillar. Swami Muktananda said too many religions stressed a particular approach to something resounding as universal. They forgot that there was nothing existing anywhere that was not God. In a discourse, he said modern religions now fill up the apparent differences between men and their relationships to god. All faiths thatarose are a result of the undying urge of men to experience the deepest part of the human condition. Kashmir Saivism recognized the entire universe to be manifestation of divine consciousness. Man's foremost duty in life is to know the "self". Siddha Yoga urges all seekers to be aware that "God lives with you". Through the grace of a *Siddha Guru* and the process of meditation, anyone can turn spiritual and experience the Divine truth.

Faith in Religion is often considered as superstition, assumption and Illusion by the scientific view in the modern age. But it is not so, by scanning the truth we find that Religion is most necessary for everybody. Religion teaches us how one should enjoy life, which proposes the right path of lifestyle, and also warns about immoralities.

Religion in general attempts to provide answers to the following questions.

- What is the base of the world creation?
- What is cause of our life?
- What is goal of our life?
- What should we do?

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- Where do we go after death?
- Where do we come from?
- Is there anybody who rules the universe? And so on.

Different styles of finding answer to the above question are known as different religions. If one thinks of finding answers to the above questions it is a waste of time, it will be superstition, assumption, Illusion. Then life becomes worthless, valueless, and aimless. It becomes very dangerous to others as well as to the self. Those who try to answer these questions are considered as prophets. They gave systematic answers to the above questions and they have shown the right conduct of life. We should notice the statement of prominent Philosopher, Radha Krishnan "Theme of all the Religions is the same, as the same water poured into different vessels."

The religions try to please the superior authorities, creator, organizer, and destroyer or both in their different unique ways. Every follower claims that his system is better than the rest. If a religion will cover all the facts related to life, then what is the reason for existence of so many religions? Only one religion would have been followed by all the people of the world. Verily, this is not the case. There may be something which is not covered by particular religious system.

On perusing the Indian History so many religions namely Jainism, Buddhism, Lingayathism and Sikkhism. And many in number of Faiths took birth in India. If we go to find reason we find

- Gender inequality
- Discrimination based on birth
- Untouchabilty
- Superstitions
- Wrong rituals

Many counter actions in the form of Religions and Faiths against the above mentioned evils Lingayathism is also a systematic contention of the above tyrannical practices.

However in the Scripture of Hinduism we may not find place for these evils but it is damaging our country for many centuries. Basavaeshwara gave brilliant solution to the knotty problems. In a

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democratic way Basaveshwara framed Lingayath religion and gave written constitution called Vachan Litreature.

Britishers identified five religions as independent religions based on religions at the time of defining law policies for census. Followers of Buddha, Jain and Sikh religions were alert. Britishers accepted the notion of religious experts at that time. Lingayath religion also got an opportunity but because of priests (heads of religious organizations), selfish writers this opportunity was lost. Lingayath denied independent fold by stating as they belong to Veerashaiva and part of Hindu in writing. Lack of knowledge, selfishness and proud of the priests (heads of religious organizations) and leaders became major obstacle in this way.

In accordance with any aspect Lingayath religion is not at all a part of Hinduism. In Hinduism people belonging to 4 Verna and untouchable by name of fifth Verna were there. If Lingayath accepts belonging of Hinduism then they should chose a Verna one of the four Verna. In Hindu there is Upanayan and Yagnopavita (religious consecration) to the Brahmins, Vaishyas and Kshatriyas only. They only are treated as Dvijas. For the peoples of Shudras and fifth Verna's there is not at all Upanayana (religious consecration). People not having Janivar (Upanayana) are considered as Shudra. Without having Janivar Lingayaths will become untouchables. Hindu religion is based on Veda, Agama, Shruti, and Smritis. Guru Basaveshwara the founder of Lingayath religion contends the faults of Veda, Shastra and Smiritis. The Vachana scripture given by Guru Basaveshwara and his fellow persons (Saharans) is the constitution of Lingayath religion. Hindu religion gives preference to fire (Agni) and is followed by performing Homa-Havana, Yagna-Yaga as Agni. Wedding is also performed in the presence of Agni. Lingayath religion does not perform any consecration it does in the witness of Guru, Linga and Jangama. In Vedic Hindu the entrance is restricted. Lingayath accepts every one through Deeksha. By these above points it is essential to get the independent recognition for to Lingayathism.

Inspite of the fast growing developments in scientific and technological fields which are aiming at providing material comforts to the human life the contemporary social systems are endowed with many irregularities and difficulties with regard to the socio-political, economic and religious life of the people. There are problems with regard to inequalities-social and economic democratic setup. The

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present study intended to find out the solutions, if any, that are available in the two religions Hinduism and Lingayathism. This being the broader objective, it also aims to establish the relevance of the doctrines of Lingayathism to provide a solution to the contemporary times by establishing independent status from Hinduism.

The study of contemporary world conveys the fact that, as time changes, thinking style of man also changes. Modern scientific and technical inventions, reforms, sophisticated advanced facilities which we consider as developments, turned man into materialistic, immoral, selfish and narrow minded one. Behind each and every action there must be the will of man. Action may be useful to or harmful to person/society. Individually every person needs the practice of morality, good conduct, and compliance of philosophy, rituals and ethics, for the welfare of person as well as society.

Aim of religion above all is to preach and practice above all. Religion promotes to thinking about the welfare of everybody. That's why religion is most essential for this changing/fast developing world. It is the major need of competent world. Worship is known as *Bhakti*. Way of Devotion may differ. But each and every action of devotion must have scientific temper, otherwise they may be considered as superstition. Swami Vivekananda says morality is stepping stone of spirituality. If religion is an assumption, then life is also an assumption. Literature related to religion is created by assumption and experience. World may achieve so many never changing the moral values like humanity, mildness and dedication. Ethics and Philosophy are everlasting factors, which preached by scholars are valuable till today. "Science without Religion is lame; Religion without science is blind" said Albert Einstein. The contemporary scientific developments are not guided by philosophical wisdom, hence they are becoming lame without proper orientation.

Today our society is slipping from good to bad, economy is getting more in importance and *Dharma* is losing its hold. If the situation continues, then man will turn to a brute.

The rational way of thought observes that worship, practice of rituals and many worthless activities are done in the name of God. Most of them do not have meaning. As it is often observed, "In the field of

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religion, intelligent follow the foolish people" (Kumar Kakkaya Pol, 2005: 86). The above mind set is being created by thinkers, because existing religious practices are full of superstitions. And the Religious movements are lagging behind to give scientific compatibility as per the developing mindset of the changing world. Nowadays people started assuming that 'faith in religion is nothing but superstition, assumption and Illusion'. In the present world of science we find religion is most essential for every human being. Religion teaches us how to enjoy life, by proposing the right path, life style and moral values.

Though no religion intends to negatively affect the life of the follower by its own system of practice in a long course of its development there is a possibility of some unwanted irregularities entering into the religious social practices. Hinduism and Lingayathism are no axception to this. Hinduism in its more than 2000 years of development has given space to many religious and social irregularities which are codified and prevalent even today. These irregularities have been checked by different contradictions at many stages of its developments Jainism and Buddhism in the earlier period, Lingayathism in the modern period have come into existence as reaction to their contemporary and religious and social dogmas. Though originated as a reactionary mechanism to the prevalent dogmas Lingayathism also in its growth of 800 year's has also crumbled into some dogmas. However both the religions have their own unique and universal characteristics which can be of same use in solving problems of the contemporary human life.

In order to achieve the aim of finding some useful solutions from the essential features of both the religions, the present study firstly explained foundations and essential characteristics of both the religions separately in different chapters, following the discussion on essential features it compared the similarities and differences between the Hinduism and Lingayathism.

Following the discussion on origin and diversity, Chapter I dealt with the essential features of Hinduism. Hinduism, being one of the oldest religions surviving, has its roots in the Indus valley civilization to Vedic and Epic cultures. These sources were discussed with their various aspects and features in order to draw the ancient spirit of Hinduism. The essential characteristics which have originated from the above roots

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such as *Chaturvarnas, Chaturashramas, Purusharthas* are elaborately analyzed. The law of Karma as the regulating principle of human action and the four kinds of *Yogas* which play a key role in culturing the human life are also discussed. In yogic system is one of the significant aspects of Hinduism which has contributed, has been contributing richly to the life of the human beings. This system has still much in store to offer to the contemporary world.

Following the discussion on the status of Lingayathism with regard to its relation with *Veerashaivism,* Chapter II discussed the ambiguities involved in accepting its independent status and the questions with regard to its founder. It establishes that Lingayathism is an independent religion and Basaveshwara is its founder. The philosophy of Lingayathism called Shaktivishishtadvaita which explains the relationship between individual, God and the world in a more systematic way than that of Vedantic schools is explained. The essential features which differentiate *Lingayathism* from any other religion such as *Astavarana, Panchachara, and Shatasthala* are discussed elaborately. Treating work as worship and contributing a share in the earnings to the society which are called Kayaka and Dashooha are invented by Lingayathism to remove social and economical inequalities by the society. Anubhava Mantapa as a socio-religious platform aimed at achieving a democratic system, where the experiences can be shared and daily confronted problems can be solved is a unique direct democratic system available in the Lingayathism which can provide a sort of public sphere to solve the problems of human life.

Hinduism and Lingayathism which have originated in the same soil, of course in different times against different historical conditions have certain similarities with regard to some social customs and metaphysical beliefs. They commonly share same kind of theory of Karma, Doctrine of rebirth, concept of *Atman* and *Omkar* has a sacred religious symbol along with the rejection of polygamy and polyandry. Both agree in identifying the six passions to be enemies which are to be avoided, however, Lingayathism believes that they can be used in a modified and positive way for the development of the life of the individual. Further the comparison of the doctrines and practices of the both the religion was done. *Shaktivishishtadvaita* as a more sophisticated and refined system of Philosophy than the Vedic school is

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presented. Hindu Philanthropic system of Dana is compared with Dashooha which over through the hierarchy between the donor and the receiver by proposing the contribution of part of their earnings to the society. The presuppositions and prerequisites of initiation ceremony of Hinduism are more complicated than Lingayathism which rejects all kinds of prerequisites. Compared to the Casteism of Hinduism, Lingayathism advocates a socialistic egalitarian view. Polytheistic priest oriented ritualistic way of worship of Hinduism is compared to monotheistic non-ritualistic direct form of worship of Lingayathism.

Basaveshwara is imprisoned by Lingayaths. First Basaveshwara is to be released from the limits of Lingayaths. Basaveshwara not only belongs to Lingayaths. He is a universal humanitarian.

Contributions of Basaveshwara to the universe are countless. Today our perception of equality is concept of Basaveshwara. Kayaka, Dashooha, Social justice, Emancipation of women, Movement to eradication of untochability and concept of universal welfare are the contributions of Basaveshwara.

Following these comparisons it is pointed out that Hindu social Ethics which drew its ancient form from the *Varnashramadharma* around which many social and religious evils have cropped up has denied the due rights to majority of the people including the women and the so called lower caste people. *Lingayathism* though possesses unique and universally acceptable social and religious doctrines and practices, because of lack of knowledge and orientation is not getting its due recognition among the religions of India.

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GLOSSARY

Advaita	:	Non-dual
Agami Karma	:	Forthcoming Karma
Agamy Karma	:	forthcoming karma
Agni	:	Fire
Anga	:	Body
Anubhava Mantapa:	:	Religious council founded by Guru Basaveshvara. A platform for discussion of human values by Sharanas.
Apad dharma	:	thee duties of all during crisis
Aranyaka	:	Parts of Vedas
Ash.rama:	:	Hindu stage of life (Brahmchartya, Grahasthya, Vanaprasthya and Sanyasa), the term is also used to refer to the place of residence of Rishis or Saints.
Ashprushya	:	Untouchable
Astavarana	:	Eight coverings of Lingayath religion, Guru, Linga, Jangama, Vibhuti, Rudrakshi, Mantra, Padodaka and Prasada.
Atman	:	Soul
Atmavimarsh	:	Self-realization
Atharva Veda	:	First of four Veda
Aayata	:	Acceptance. Adoption
Bhagavdgita	:	Preaching to Arjuna by Sri Krishna at battle field of Mahabharata.
Bhakta	:	Devotee.
Bhakti	:	Devotion. A moment of devotion
Bhoga	:	Enjoyment/lust
Brahmana	:	A superior most class of people under Hindu religion and Verna philosophy.
Chintamani	:	A pearl, which is capable to give anything if think for it (comes in Purana)
Dalit	:	Person belonging to the lower caste. Untouchable.

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Dana	:	Gift or alms
Dashooha	:	Contributing the part of earning for the benefit of society.
Deekshe	:	A religious ceremony by which a person is initiated into Lingayathism with a personal Linga which he can tie around his neck.
Devalaya	:	Temple. worshipping place.
Deva	:	Deity. God.
Dharma	:	Mode of life or code of conduct.
Dharma-Shastra	:	Scripture of religion,
Dvaita	:	Dual doctrine about reality (creator).
Ganesa	:	Deity, son of Shiva.
Gayatri mantra	:	Popular hymn of Hinduism.
Gruhastha	:	Family holder, married person
Guru	:	Priest, teacher, preceptor
Guna	:	Character, Quality.
Holageri	:	A place outside the village meant for the stay of untouchables
Iccha,	:	Desire
Ikya	:	Oneness with God. Union with god.
Indra	:	Deity, one of trinity god.
Istalinga:	:	Personal Linga of every Lingayath. Symbolic representation of God, unique identity of Lingayathism.
Itihasa	:	History
Jadavastu	:	Immovable material
Jangama	:	1) A class of priests in Lingayathism dedicated themselves for the good of the society with whom the excess earnings are to be deposited by everyone 2) Moveable. 3) Knowledge.
Jivatma	:	Individual self
Jivan Mukta	:	One who has transcended material life,

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		the person attained salvation while living.
Jnana	:	Knowledge
Karana	:	Sense
Karma	:	Preordained life based upon the doings in the past life
Karmikamala	:	Impurities of Physical body
Kayaka	:	Doing one's work with dedication and attain salvation
Kayaka	:	Doing the work as divine duty, personal development and : self bliss work and Dashooha
Kshatriya	:	Second superior category of people under Hindu religion who are warriors
Kriya	:	Action, Deed
Kudalasangama	:	A place of meeting point of two rivers where Basaveshvara breathed his last.
Kudalasangamadeva	:	Basaveshwara's pen name, which he uses in his Vachanas.
Linga	:	An oval shaped black stone symbolizing god Shiva used for worship.
Lingayath	:	A person who wears Istalinga on his body and has become a member of the Lingayath. Acceptor of Istalinga willingly.
Lobha	:	Lust
Mada	:	Proud
Mahabharata	:	The great epic. Also considered as Upanishada
Mahamane	:	House of Basaweshwara and a center for all kinds of intellectual activities.
Mahesha	:	Second stage of Astavarana. One among trinity god.
Mana	:	Mind
Mantra	:	Hymn, Chant.

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Matsara	:	Jealousy
Mayamala	:	Impurities of Illusion
Mayavada	:	Illusionism
Moha	:	Delusion
Moksha	:	Salvation
Nandi	:	Vehicle of Shiva
Omkara	:	Hindu Prefix word of God generator, organizer and destroyer, used in almost hymns.
Padodaka	:	Water with which legs of Sharanas is washed and used as very sacred water.
Panchachara	:	Five code of conducts of practices at Lingayath religion. Lingachara, Sadachara, Shivachara, Ganachara Bhrutyachara.
Papa	:	Sin
Paramatma	:	Supreme soul (the super-self)
Parashiva	:	Supreme reality
Prarabdha karma	:	Fate, Karma to be faced at present
Prasada	:	Food dedicated to the God. Grace of the god
Prasadi	:	3rd Stage of Shatsthala of Lingayath religion.
Pranalingi	:	4th Stage of Shatasthala of Lingayath religion
Punya	:	Credit of good deeds
Purana	:	Scriptures of past history which has moral ethics
Purusharthas	:	Goals to be achieved by a Hindu through four mediums of moral deeds Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha
Purusharthas	:	Four Goals set to Hindu
Rama	:	Hero of Ramayana
Ravana	:	Willan of Ramayana

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Rig Veda	:	One of the 4 Vedas
Rudrakshi	:	Instrument used meditation (Japa) and wear on body in the form of garland
Samarasya	:	Union
Sama Veda	:	One of the 4 Vedas
Samsara	:	Stage of family life. Worldly life
Samskaras	:	Consecration
Sanatana	:	Ancient
Sanchita karma	:	Previous accounts of deeds (Karma)
Sanchita Karma	:	Karma of previous life
Sannihita	:	A stage, in which devotee realize that God is within self and his every deed is for God only
Sankhya	:	Type of Yoga
Sanyasa	:	Stage of Hermitage.
Shaivism	:	Cult of Shiva followers
Shaktism	:	Cult of mother goddess worship.
\Shaktivishishtadvaita	:	A special doctrine about the reality of Lingayath, different from all the others
Shaktivishishtadvaita	:	Lingayathism Philosophy of individual, God and world Special no-Dualistic Philosophy propagated by Basaveshwara.
Sharana	:	A male devotee of GOD, who has attained higher order by joining Lingayathism and surrendering himself to God.
Sharane	:	A female devotee of GOD, who has attained higher order by joining Lingayathism and surrendering herself to God.
Shastra	:	Divine document under Hindu religion.
Shatsthala	:	Six avenues of attainment for a Lingayath
Shivachara/ Shivayogi	:	A devotee of Lord Shiva, who has reached the attainment.

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Shivaganas	:	Group of the devotees
Shiva yoga Mandira	:	Training centre of Jangama, run with help of society.
Shoodra	:	Fourth and lowest category of people under Hindu religion, who are to do only menial jobs, untouchable.
Shunya Peetha	:	A seat of presiding deity of Anubhava Mantapa, Allamaprabhu was first president.
Sita	:	Wife of Rama deity of epic Ramayana
Sloka	:	Hymn
Sthavaralinga	:	A finely polished stone oval shaped with flat bottom, attached permanently to the ground in a temple, symbol of Lord Shiva.
Sutaka	:	Impediment
Swayata	:	State of mind in which an individual realize the soul through worship of Istalinga
Tantra	:	Mendicantism.
T*anu*	:	Body
Upanayana	:	A religious ceremony among Brahmins, which is also known as thread ceremony, where under a Brahmin boy, is religiously inducted by putting a thread on his body.
Upanishad	:	Scriptures which define Vedas in better understand way and with instances.
Vachana	:	A special type of literature, Poetical verses as oath of very high moralities, basic literature of Lingayath Religion, written in simple Kannada language, formulated by various Sharanas and Sharanes on their own experience knowledge (Anubhava)
Vahana	:	Vehicle

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Vaishya	:	Third category of people under Hindu religion who do business and trading.
Vaishnavism	:	Cult of followers of Vishnu
Varna	:	Class status of a Hindu.
Varnashrama	:	Classification of human beings into four categories of Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra under Hindu religion.
Varuna	:	God of rain
Vasudaivakutumbakam	:	Entire world is one family a concept of Hindu religion.
Vayu	:	Air
Veda	:	Basic and ancient scripture of Hinduism.
Veerakta	:	A person in state of celibacy, a unique category created after the life time Guru Basaveshvara, higher then devotee and lesser then the modified Guru.
Veerashaiva	:	A sect which was existing before Basaveshvara. Derived from Shaivism.
Vibhuti	:	Ash used to perform Puja
Vishistadvaita	:	Special Doctrine of Lingayath, differ from all others.
Vishnu	:	One of the three generator, organizer and destroyer, according to Hindu
Vishva Guru	:	Universal preceptor, teacher
Vishwa Dharama	:	Cosmopolitan religion
Yajna	:	A ceremony of invoking God by fire.
Yajur Veda	:	One if the four Veda's of Hindu scripture
Yama	:	The deity have responsibilities of distributing rewards as per deeds (of Hindu)
Yoga	:	Union. Oneness. The medium of attainment of salvation through Hindu ethics.

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Annexure - A

I Articles Differentiating Lingayath Religion

1) Basaveshwara and Veerashaiva
2) Sri Basaveshwara And The Bhagavadgita
3) Definition of Brahmana as per Buddhists
4) Manu and Basaveshwara
5) Swamy Vivekananda and Basaveshwara
6) Difference between Istalinga and Sthavara Linga
7) Hindu and Lingayath religions
8) Solicitous request to Lingayaths

II Aims and Objectives of Organizations

1) Basava Dharma Peetha
2) Rastreeya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS)

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1. Basaveshwara and Veerashaiva

Among the religious faiths that have contributed from memorial antiquity to mould the thought and life of the Hindus, most important are *Saivam, Vaishavism* and *Shaktism. Shaivm* dates back to chalcolitic age and perhaps even beyond the limit. *Saiva Siddhanta, Verasaivam, Kashmir Saivam, Sivadvaita* of *Srikantha* are important schools of *Saivism*.

All the schools of *Savism* has *Agamic* and Vedic origin. The *Saiva Siddhanta* stand out among several *Saiva* cults as the most highly developed. It treats other schools of *Saivism* and kindred schools; but considers them as more or less imperfect approached to the ultimate Truth, which it claims to have attained. The term *Saiva Siddhanta* is suggestive at once of its kinship other schools of *Saivism* and of its distinction there form. They must be as old as the Mahabharata for references to them are found in *Santiparva*.

Agmas and Vedas are both held to be the revelations of God. If the Vedas are considered as the 'tree', Agamas are considered as its fruits, *Saivagamas* explain the principles of *Siddhanata*. In the *Shivagamas* we have reference to various systems like *Pasupata*, soma, *Saiva* and *Lakuam*. It is stated in the *Sivagamas* that Lord Siva manifesting Himself in the form of *Sadasiva*, revealed the four Vedas and twenty eight agamas along with their *upa-agamas*.

We may say that the Vedic and *Agamic* streams of thought agree with regard to certain concepts. Passages from the Agamas could be cited to show that they are in general agreement with the Vedic teaching. *Muktagama* speaks of the *Siddhanata* as setting forth the central teaching of the Veda. (*Veda saràmldam tantram*) In another place it says, this *Siddhanta* knowledge which is the significance of Vedanta is supremely felicitous.

Saint Tirumular, the author of Tiruantram discountenances the view that the Vedas and Agamas are antagonistic. The great people could not see the difference between the Vedas and Agamas. He says that the Vedas and Agamas are true, both being the revelations of God. One has to consider them as expounding the general and special doctrines respectively. They are the words of the Lord. It is suggested that the two differ in their conclusion only at a peripheral level. In his

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commentary on the Vedanta sutra, *Srikantha* states that Vedas and *Shivagamas* convey essentiality the same teaching and

That he does not notice any difference between them. All the *Saiva* system agrees with the fundamental concept that the Supreme Being is Siva.

Every Agama consists of four parts or Padas. Vidya or Jnana Pada, Yoga Pada, Kriya Pada and Cerya Pada. The Jnana Pada is considered as to lead the knowledge of God, and the Yoga Pada to the concentration of the soul on an object. Kriya Pada gives information about all performance ganging from laying the foundation stones for the temples to the consecration of various images. The carypada teaches the methods of worship. The contents of the last two sections relate to the details of ritual etc. only the

The importance of Saivagamas is proven y meaning siddantins confer on the word. 'Agama' for them each syllable of the term is denotative of particular category.

A - Pasa

Ga - Pasu

136. G. Gangadharan Lesson 18, *'Verasaivam and Kashmir Saivam', study material of M.A 1st year Religion and Philosophy, Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai.*

Jnana pada has values for a deep understanding of Indian psychology

Ma-Pati

Agama comes to mean for them a cook treating the three eternal realities, i.e., matter, soul, and God. According to A-Siva, Ga-Moksha and Ma-removal of Malas.

Verasaivism believes like the Trika in the identity of the soul and the Supreme Being, who is the only entity and reality, and who, assuming existence first, become the material as welfare as the efficient cause of the world while in Saiva Siddhanata the supreme God is only the efficient cause. Like the Advaita Vedanata it traces the origin of the world to Avidya or Mayas; Maya which is also known as Shakti of Siva is the origin of matter, as in Saiva Siddhanata and is also in illusion, as in the Advaita Vedanta. Verasaivaism in this respect agrees apparently with the Trika, where Maya, the power Shakti of Siva is an illusion but

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real as it comes from the Real the supreme god; but it appears to hold that Maya is real in the beginning of the soul's spiritual journey and unreal at the end.

The individual soul, as in the trika and Advaita Vedanta, is the Supreme Siva under the influence of Avidya, the removal of which can be achieved, not only by Jnana(knowledge) of the supreme self, as in the Advaita Vedanta, but also by Kriya, strict observance of prescribed forms, Kriya, to a blind man, and him who has the knowledge of the self and no Kriya to a lame mansi therefore it emphatically insists on the necessity of both Jnana and Kriya to achieve the end.

The remarkable feature of Verasaivaism is the slight importance that it attaches to the 36 of 96 tatvas, the fundamental factors in building up the universe, which are very elaborately and minutely dealt with in the Trike and Saiva Siddhaata. They are casually alluded to in Vera saivism, and some times an attempt is made by later teachers to explain them. It seems more probable that Vera Saivism did not pay much attention to the metaphysical process of the other Siva schools Vera Saivism lays much stress on the spiritual and on the philosophical aspect of religion.

Vera saivism believes that the proper observances of prescribed duties purifies the soul and elevates it step by step, during the cause of which the soul, gaining knowledge its automatically freed from Mays or Avidya. On the complete removal of which it becomes united so Siva. This union consists in becoming entirely one without distinctness or entirely one without separate existence. It is not an "Inseparable union" like that the Saiva Siddhanata. This union is called Mukti and to attain it there are six steps Sthalas or stages or rugas of a ladder, which from the centre of Verasiva philosophy. The six stages are original to Verasaiva thought. The Verasaiva teachers describe the condition of this union with the supreme as Bayalu, Nirbayalu meaning that where there is nothing, voiled or that where existence itself is not existing. This conception correspondence to the Ruddha yet the Verasaiva is a staunch theist, and firmly believes in the existence of the power above all.

Inspite of many divergences in Philosophy and ritualism between Vera Saivism and the Saiva Siddanta, there appears to be something common to both. We have no authentic books written on Verasaivaism

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before 12th century, which would have helped us to ascertain its exact relation to other Saiva schools before that date, but after that century, when the revival took place the sixteen considers to be its apostles, were realized to the position of Puratanas, the ones, the pillars of Vir Saivism as well. There is ample reference to these sixty three Saiva saints in the Vachanas of Basava and his colleagues (1160 A.D.) their conception of god in the lower stages exactly coincides with that of Saiva Siddanta. Many passages from the Vacana-sastra contain not only the ideas found in the Tiruvasagam of Manikbavasagar and other Saiva saints, but are also couched in similar words, so as to suggest borrowing. As these two schools exist side in Southern India even today, the influence of one over the other and mutual free borrowing of ideas is not an impossibility.

The Verasaiva does not imitate slavishly the Advaita vedanata, but that it has s system of its own on the same lines, taking care to avoid arudity for devout souls and sotening down the theory of nonentity which his applicable only in the last stage. Though the ultimate goal of the Verasaiva Philosophy is merging of the soul from god. To efface the distinctness, this soul has to climb six steps. Before reaching the first step, called Bhakta Sthala, the stage of the devotee or layman. God is viewed as a personal supreme Being in the midst of a Samsara in the shape of wife, children, attendants, a place to live in, from which he enforces his will etc. the conception of the personality of god vanishes when the individual soul mounts the first step, but the belief in the distinctions between the soul and the deity is still kept up. At this stage an attempt is first made by the individual soul to realize the supreme reality. The realization begun in this step continues in succeeding stages, the increasing step by step, and reaches its climax in the fifth step, side by side with the realization of the deity, the distinciness, apparent in the first step goes on decreasing as the individual soul rises higher and higher, and completely vanishes in the fifth step; which is called Sharana Sthala the stage where the individual is completely surrendered to god. Again side with the decrease of the soul's distinctness, the confirmation of its oneness with God gains ground slowly and reaches its climax in the fifth step. In the sixth step called Ikya-sthala, there is complete, union and identification of the individual soul with Siva. Then the individual soul is merged in the supreme as ether is distinctness the confirmation

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of its oneness with god gains ground slowly and reaches its climax is the fifth step. In the sixth step called Aikya-sthala, there is complete union and identification of the individual soul with Siva. The beginning there is distinctness and in the end there is unity. It is probably on the basis of this that the Verasaiva philosophy is styled Bhedabhda or Dvaitadvaita by Scriptpandata, the author, of the commentary on Badarayana sura namely Srikara or Srikar. Sripatis views appear to agree with the general points of Verasaivam, because he calls Verasaivam, philosophy of Visesavlta, monism with its own specially, it is to be noted that Verasaivam holds the specialty of the soul with God after full realization and achievement in the Aikyasthala only and not before, which is not the case in the Advaita Vedanta.

The Verasaiva religion as professed and practiced in Karnataka during the past several centuries forms a significant chapter in the story of Indian culture. No doubt it has revived and preserved several elements from the Trika, the Saiva Siddahanta and other Indian schools. But the fusion of these elements into the entity that is Verasaivam is itself an original achievement.

2. Sri Basaveshwara And The Bhagavadgita

If the Vedas represent the earliest and best record of poetry, religion and philosophy produced by Indian genius, the *Bhagavadgita* is by common consent its summary in epic language. If a gap of one thousand years separates them and explains the development of a broad religious outlook in answer to the new challengers brought by time, a similar gap separates the *Bhagavadgita* from Sri Basaveshwara whose inspiring *Vachanas*, or musings, inspire us even today. At first sight, it might appear that the two are as much distant in teaching as in time. The two belong to diverse traditions, one *Saiva* and the other *Vaishnava*, held in popular imagination to be diametrically opposed to each other. But a study of the two texts will reveal how surprisingly alike are their teachings, how the same spirit inspires both and how an identical message of universal love and duty in the appointed task was proclaimed for the benefit of the common man. This is a modest attempt indicating the essential agreement in fundamentals in the thoughts of the Gita and Sri Basaveshwara.

A survey of the conditions prevailing at the time when the Gita was

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composed will show us the fundamental harmony between thought and action or principle and practice, ritual and knowledge, or religion and philosophy, had disappeared in the life even of epic heroes who, by definition, represent ideal characters. The pristine spring of the eternal Vedas had almost dried up in the rising sands of cults and caste barriers. The spirit of universal religion and philosophy was practically beyond the purview of the popular minds who were confined to conventional forms, ritual conduct.

Ideologists have shown by their researches how the rise of the *Bhagavadgita* is due to the upsurge of a revaluation of the current values by historical personality, *Krsna,* with his new message of Bhakti, or devotion, to one Almighty god, a person who was deified later through he did not spare some of the blind rituals practiced in name of Vedic scriptures. It is difficult to say that the doctrine of Bhakti or devotion to a personal God and the idea of *Niskama-Karma*, or disinterested action, are propounded for the first time in the Gita.

The word Bhakti itself is traceable in the earlier Svetasvatara *Upanishad:*

Yasa deve para bhaktih yatha deve tatha guru

Tasyaite kathita hyarthah prakasante mahatmanah.

To him who has the highest devotion for God and for this spiritual teachers as for God, these matters declared here will became manifest if he be a great soul. (*Svetasvatara Upanisad VI, 23*). And the very initial verse of the *Isavasyopanisad* speaks of the value of detachment in life. Perhaps one might go a step backwards and see a sort of family resemblance between this *Bhatia* and *Upasana* of the *Brahmanas* and the *Upanishads*, the term Upasana including in a very significant way the system of sacrifices (*karmakand*a) as much as the knowledge of the inner soul (*Jnanakanda*). Whatever these historical antecedents, the Vedic sacrifices as much as systems of Vedanta had both become at large in the process of their over-specialisation. Hence the need for a democratic, popular, practical guide-book in religion and philosophy which was ably fulfilled by the Gita.

137. K. KRISHNAMURTY Page 101-108; "Sri Basaveshwara Eighth Century, A Commemoration Volume",

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By the twelfth century which saw the birth of Basaveshwara, the Gita itself had fallen into the hands of the orthodox *acaryas* and had suffered the same fate as that of the Vedas before the advent of the Gita. Rival sects like *Saivism* and *Vaishnavism* had developed in the spirit of mutual competition, decrying each other. The mass of the people were plunged in ignorance and superstition. The stories of rivalry among gods in the *puranas* only helped to destroy the first principles of divine grace and devotion to one God. Social life was rent asunder by prejudices due to castes and vocations. To iron out these differences-social, economical, political and religious-between people by an appeal to the inner spirit of true religion was ably fulfilled in Karnataka by Sri Basaveshwara.

Lord *Krsna* of the *Bhagavadgita* is no founder of a new religion nor is there any proclamation on his part of a new found faith. What the Gita does is to remove the dross accumulated over the true spirit of the Vedic religion by a fervent appeal to the heart, by a reassurance of one God Almighty who is ever open to devotion and by whose grace alone man can find peace here and now, whatever his station or vocation in life.

'He who loves me shall not be lost' (*na me bhaktah pranasyati*) is the ringing voice of the Gita, and so too is Basava's. In fact, in the trinity of *Verashaiva* saints, Sri Basaveshwara is invariably described as the embodiment of ideal *bhakti.* Similarly, scholars like Charpentier have observed that the *Bhagavadgita* is practically a Bhakti-Upanishad, verses from II.39 to XI.50 and chapters XII to XVIII, 73, forming one unit. This Bhakti of the *Bhagavadgita* is quite distinct from the piety (*sradha*) in performance of rituals.

A singular contribution of the Gita is its synthesis of ascetic doctrine of salvation by knowledge and the sacrificial doctrine of salvation by work in the higher synthesis of what the Gita calls "Yoga" *Jnana* by itself or Karma by itself is not enough. They must both be transformed into Yoga. This is a very untranslatable term which means much more in the Gita then in the system of *Pathanjali.* The Gita Understands by *Shankhya*, the method of knowledge, and by the term *Karmayoga*, the method of work (II23). It is aware that they are not opposed but complementary to each other. At the same time the Gita emphasizes the higher way, namely *bhakti* or love for and trust in a personal deity (XI33, XI48, 53, XII 8, XVIII 62-66).

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The Gita condemns in no uncertain terms the austerity or worship which is practiced to win welcome, honour and respect and with hypocrisy. (cf. XVII. 4-6). Such austerity with cruel intent is said to be *tamasa* or darkish.

The true saving spirit is ---

Speech that gives no shock, true, pleasant, helpful; the practice of sacred recitation, these constitute austerity of speech.

Serenity of mind benignity, silence and self-restraint and purity of soul are called austerity of mind. (XVII 15-16).

As a corollary of all this it follows that work is the means for one on the spiritual path while quietude is the nature of one who has reached the goal (VI.3). The very final message of Lord Krsna is,

Whatever work you do, whatever you eat, whatever you sacrifice or give, whatever be your *austere practice, do all, O son of Kunti, as an offering to me (IX.27). Even those who are born of the womb of sin, women, Vaisyas and Sudras too, if they resort to me they go on the highest way. (IX.32)*

The Gita urges no one to leave his worldly employment in order to practice piety. The doctrine of vocation *(Svadharma)* is a part of the poem. Where a man is placed, there he must do his duty:-

Better a man's own duty, though ill done than another's duty well performed. (XVIII.47)

Religion ceases to be a privilege of those who are rich or learned. In the arms of *bhakti* all are welcome, high and low alike. Morality itself becomes worship instead of an exercise. Bhakti ensures God's grace who is always close to man if only he should open his heart to Him (Gita, II.47, 71, II.30, IX.29, etc.). The Gita idea of Bhakti is thus the higher *bhakti* distinguished from the lower *bhakti* popularized by Puranas and involving sensuality. While lower *bhakti* is more emotional, the higher *bhakti* is an end per se, tantamount to deliverance.

Against the background of fundamental teachings of the Geeta presented above, if one reads the *vachanas* of Basava, one would be struck by the amount of correspondence in essentials. The castigation of mere ritualists as hollow worshippers is the same in both. In *vachana* no 545, Basava declares-

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You ceremonialists who indulge in empty polemics, you listen to Me- first try to understand that even Vishnu according to your own accounts is caught in the cycle of rebirth unlike Siva.

Understand the spirit of your Vedic Mantras which mention the highest station of Vishnu (Visnoryatpuramam padam and atyatisthaddasangulam' etc.); you ritual is far away from that exalted state.

Both the Gita and *Vachanashastra* are unsparingly critical of scholastic discussions of the so called *Pundits*. Both are interested in the awakening of the inner spirit. If the Gita dismisses them as the Veda-Vada, Basaveshwara too observes

"When the Mimamsaka starts with the question what is the proof for the existence of God?, I shall cut the tip of his nose with the razor one is the God Almighty with eyes everywhere, with face everywhere, with arms everywhere etc.,

(Visvatscaksu visvato mukaho.). Next I shall rub it out with the brick of Vaisesika logic and hold up to his face the mirror, namely, my Lord Kudalasangamadeva."

Just as Lord *Krsna* uses words like Yoga in his own special sense, so too does Basava use words like *bhakti* and *stala* and *nirvaya,* another time he denies the gradual nature of these levels of mystic experience as in *Vachana.* He is ever interested in the spirit and ever opposed to the dead letter. Talking of Anubhava, or the mystic experience, Basava gives us metaphorical images-

Anubhava is the treasure hid underground. It is a veritable gem of the inner spirit. It is a dream dreamt by the babe etc. It is the Anubhava which runs as the vital strength that relates and sublimates every means at the disposal of man-Without Anubhava Bhakti is pointless. Without Anubhava, Linga ceases to yield bliss. Without Anubhava again, Prasada is fruitless.

The word Jnana, Bhakti, Guru, Linga, Jangama, Achara, Sthala are used in wide significances by Sri Basaveshwara ranging from the finite to the ineffable. To one who is not specialist, the prices rendering of these shades will go difficult.

But the importance assigned by Basaveshwara to right action and conduct, right thinking and right living in daily life in dual social, political

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religious and spiritual- is unmistakable. In his own metaphorical language,

How can the waves that rise in the vast and deep ocean appear outside the ocean When they do appear, will the ocean ever blame itself? To the perfect soul according to Basava there is no second at all because in his universality he feels him self everywhere even like the ocean.

Knowledge is naturally reflected in action and the cycle of Samsara is one of god's making and redemption from it therefore is possible only by divine grace. All ideas of pride and prejudice that bind one to Samsara are, therefore, truly kept under restraint only by the balm of Bhakti.

Among the far-flung Vachanas of Basava which are addressed straight to the soul of men in the voice of fellow being, unlike the Gita where we have the voice of God incarnate, we have just selected the one ruling idea of Bhakti which is Basaveshwaras positive contribution to the history of Indian thought. In the words of his contemporary, Channbasavanna, the position of Basavanna is positive, while that of Allama is negative. It was Chennabasvanna who discharged the onerous task of sustaining Basaveshwaras philosophical stand with the authority of agama and he chooses in particular the texts-

- Bhakterasadhyam ni hi kincidasti
- Bhaktya sarvasiddayah siddhyanti and
- Sivabhaktisamavese na jati parikalpana

Kallamathada Prabhudevaru who is a standing authority of the fifteenth century on the philosophy of Verasaivism quotes some texts which are very distinctive in raising the status of bhakti to heights unknown before.

- Dharmadi purusharthamcaturnam paratah par Panchamah purushartho hi bhaktih saivi santani. "Bhakti is a faith of life. It is higher then the accepted four".
- Na yogo na tapo naraca karmh ko pi na vidyate Amadye sivamarge smin bhakireka prasasyate.

"In this Shiva way without delusion", there is neither yoga nor taps, neither Puja nor aught else. Bhakti and Bhakti alone stands supreme!

It follows as a corollary from this unique idea of Bhakti that an active social life for the good of humanity at large is the very hallmark of a

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perfected soul. Here again, the close similarity between the Gita idea of Jeevanmuktas like Janaka who work for the upkeep of the world (Lokasangraha) is unmistakable. In the same spirit that Krsna threw upon the gates of salvation to the high and the low, Basaveshwara went a step ahead in recognizing saints among the lowest castes and professions.

In the breadth of outlook, in the sprit of tolerance, in the emphasis on positive service to society, in the denigration of petty dividing attitudes, in the reassurance of divine grace a true soul in quest of peace, in an ethical philosophy harmonizing all the best that was thought in this land, we find a great deal of similarity that was thought in this land, we find a great deal of similarity between Bhagavadgita and Basaveshwara. The differences relate only to details and in view of the changed conditions of Indian society Basaveshwara's contribution was very much needed. The language of Gita is Sanskrit and the thought fitted to an epic framework. This could not fire the spirit of the masses in the twelfth century. Basaveshwara used the language of the people with all the force of folk-idiom and all the graces of effective poetry to bring home to one and all the message he wanted to deliver. Herein lies Basava's greatness and his ever-lasting appeal to the Kannada minds.

One modern interpreter of Basaveshwara's thought has hazarded the hypothesis that Basaveshwara has an ironic fling at the Bhagavdgita in vachana which says Gitava ballata jananalla, etc.

In this light of our study, such a conclusion commented on this very Vachana sees no such ironic reference. He explains that what is referred to is the natural general meaning, namely, knowledge of music. We can conclude this article with the observation that in point of beauty, popularity and philosophic breadth, the Bhagavadgita and Basaveshwara-Vachana stands on an equal footing.

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3. Definition of Brahmana as per Buddhists

Bhagavdgita for Hindus, Bible for Christians, Koran for the Muslims are the religious literature. So the Dhammapada is the religious literature for Buddhists. In Dhammapada the Bhagvan Buddha explains in 41 poems, who are Brahmana? Who should we call as Brahmana? It is quite natural that why Buddha mentions this, because he denies caste and differentiations.

Opposing the Brahmana caste, till today not giving chance to Shudra's to enter into the temple, able personals of a group are not covered by opportunities, Shudras also not having the desire to develop and overcome from reservation; nowadays the castelessness has became just talk (oral) these are the evils which acquired by the society. Casteism has grip over political field, educational field, jobs. Whereas ability coming back. Casteism nowadays became not only the problem of a house. It grown to became the problem of a village, of a nation. The ethics of Buddha, to liberate the society from the casteism no one is ready hear this, which is sad thing.

Varna system of Buddha is as follows; Man not became inferior (Shudra) by the caste, man cannot become Brahmana by caste. By deeds (Karma) one can become Shudra or Brahmana.

Bhagavan Buddha told this to Brahmana called Bharadhvaja at the street of Stavati, when he is travelling with begging bowl in hand and wears the saffron cloths.

The word Brahmana used in the Dhamma pada's Brahmana Vagga is not related to caste, which is related to the attitude (Guna). Buddha called them as Brahmana Priest having knowledge and action. He accepted donations from the Brahmana peoples. He told, he considers one who cannot do bad by bodily, by oral and by thought.

Brahmana means great person. One who overcomes from anger and troubles, and that live happily and let other to live happily. He doesn't have connection with the four fold caste system. Proud thought as superior (Brahmana) and inferior thought as belonging to lower caste, so like complexities are not needed and created by mentality. Remedy to this disease is meditation. Meditation refreshes mentally.

138. Molakalmuru Srinivasmurthy; Prajavani Kannada daily. Dated 9th December, 2006

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4. Manu and Basaweshwara

Manu says that the purpose of the creation is the progress of the world and a particular person's birth in a particular form, as *Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya* or *Shudra* depends on his *Karma* in a past birth. A man's *Varna* is part of the retributive justice that pursues the self from birth to birth. One cannot change his heritage by his volition; he must work it out by his *Karma* in his life. It is by fulfilling faithfully the duties of his *Varna* and status that one may ascend in the social scale.[1] This is how Manu supports *Varnashramadharma.* But Basaweshwara has torn down the artificial barriers erected by Varnashramadharma and has admitted into his social movement all people irrespective of their caste and creed and has provided equal rights and opportunities to all of them. According to Basaweshwara the artificial distinction of human beings into high and low is the doctrine of selfish section of the people for its personal pelf. As all human beings are the children of God, all have equal right to the course of reviving the lost divine son-hood and for reclaiming prfection.[2] As for as the ethical value and significance is concerned, every one is equal to every one else; an equality which dwells at the philosophical level.

Manu justifies the functions laid down an all *Shastras* for each Varna, *Brahmins* reading *Vedas*, *Kshatriyas* protecting the people, *Vaishyas* indulging in business and other professions and *Shudras* serving the other *Varnas.*[4] Basaweshwara has been in complete disagreement with this ideology. He says that both *Brahmin* and *Chandala* are formed of the same seven elements and, therefore, are equal. He says that knowledge cannot be the monopoly of a few people.[5] Manu says that for attainment, the preparation must be made with the holy rites laid down by the *Vedas*; in the due performance of the rites of sacrament, man can find his way for salvation.[6] Basaweshwara was against such rituals since his younger days and rejected the as irrational.[7] Manu gave an inferior position to women as only dependents on men, not to be relied upon, to cherish her beauty only to retain the love of her husband and keep only to household activities.[8] Basaweshwara makes no such discrimination between man and woman. Woman has equal rights with man to follow the path of self-evolution. Women were allowed to take up any Kayaka. Inter-group marriages and inter-dining, which were prohibited by Manu, were

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encouraged by Basaweshwara.

This brief comparison between the philosophies of Manu and Basaweshwara indicates that the two are the two poles apart. If Manu can be described as the defender of traditional Hinduism based upon the classification of the people, with unequal opportunities of rights and freedoms, Basaweshwara ca be described as a radical reformist championing equality among all people irrespective of their caste, creed, sex or any other background.

139. J.S.PATIL Sri Bawsaveshwarra's Native Jurisprdence (Unpublished thesis)

5. Swamy Vivekananda and Basaweshwara

The conditions of society that formed the background for the rise of Basaweshwara in the 12th century were also to be found in the 19th century in the whole of India. Indians had lost their sense of individuality under the tyrannical rule of Britishers when Vivekananda appeared on the scene. Like Basaweshwara, Vivekananda has also severely criticized the miserable conditions of Hindu society that were caused by the caste system in various contexts. In a conversation with his disciples, he shared his anguish in the following way:

"So long the Brahmanas have monopolized religion, but as they could not hold their ground against the strong tide of time, go and take steps so that one and all in the land may get that religion. Impress upon their minds that they have the same right to religion as the Brahmanas. Initiate all, even down to the Chandalas, in these fiery mantras. Also instruct them, in simple words, about the necessities of life, and in trade, commerce, agriculture etc. If you cannot do this, then fie upon your education and culture, and fie upon your studying the Vedas and Vedanta."

What Vivekananda said recently was anticipated and practiced by Basaweshwara eight hundred years ago. Like Basaweshwara, Vivekananda was also against the practice of untouchability. Because common men are set aside, he said, the country has seen its down fall. Therefore, he said, it is our duty to encourage the common people, liberate them and emancipate them. This is how both Basaweshwara and Vivekananda attempted to free society from the pernicious effects of the caste system. But if we look at it not from the ideological point of view, but primarily from the point of view of practice, we see that

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Basaweshwara had gone a step further than Vivekananda.

Another example on which Basaweshwara and Vivekananda came nearer to each other is regarding the concept of work. According to Basaweshwara "work is heaven" and no work is high or low. *Kayaka*, i.e. work, must be done with full dedication. On the basis of this principle Basaweshwara brought together people of different avocations. For Vivekananda also, the workshop, the study, the farmyard, and the field are as true and fit scenes for meeting of God with man as the cell of the monk or the doer of the temple. He often emphasizes the significance of complete absorption in work. He himself was a great *Karma yogi,* who dedicated his entire life for a great mission.[43]

Basaweshwara's rational intellect that fought against social superstitions is another that has some resemblance with the rational ideas of Vivekananda. In one context, Basaweshwara says "I shall fight the Vedas; I shall put the *Sastras* into shackles; I shall beat the back of *Tarka* till it is blue; I shall cut off the nose of Agamas..." Vivekananda's rational and intellectual powers were always alive. Once, somebody asked him how one of his opinions differed from that of Shankaracharya, he gave him a serene reply: "Shankaracharya was a man; you too are a man. You may think in your own way."

Basaweshwara built many institutions to propagate his ideas. The *Anubhava Mantapa* established by him occupies a most important place in the religious history of Karnataka; where under equal status was given to everyone irrespective of their caste, creed and sex. All devotees, called as *Sharanas*, tried to arrive at truth through intense discussions and debates, and then strove

140.J.S.PATIL "Sri Bawsaveshwarra's Native Jurisprdence" (Unpublished thesis)

to propagate truth, and practice it in actual life. Vivekananda, too, recognized the necessity of working through institutions. He brought together his fellow Sanyasi's and disciples and established Ramakrishna Mission. Through the centers of the Mission, he did all kinds of things from lecturing to tending the poor and the diseased, to starting libraries, hospitals and schools, and infused a new dynamic spirit in the entire society.[45]

Thus, Basaweshwara and Vivekananda worked hard, through their

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spiritual approach, for the emancipation and progress of all people and uplifted them from various taboos, superstitions, and casteism and are responsible for the regeneration of universal religion.

6. Difference between Istalinga and Sthavara Linga

Lord Basavanna, a great social reformer and founder of Lingayath Religion preached strict monotheism. Monotheism preaches 'Belief in one and only God and worshipping him in one form. 'The form Lord Basavanna gave is a global shape .The difference between Istalinga and Sthavara Linga is as follows. Compiled by Her holiness Jagdguru Mataji (Mate Mahadevi) Basava Dharma Peetha, Koodalasangama.

Istalinga	Sthavaralinga
• Istalinga is the main symbol of Lingayath community	• Worshippers of static Linga are Shaiva
• The Guru gives Istalinga to the followers through initiation	• Sthavara Linga is installed in the temple and devotees just take Darshan.
• Istalinga is the emblem of formless ultimate reality God.	• Sthavara linga is the symbol of Lord Shiva, a historical person of Kailash.
• Istalinga is always worn on the body and worshipped daily compulsorily	• Sthavara Linga is installed in temple; worshipping is optional and occasional.
• Ahamgrahopasana –worship of absolute self by individual	• Pratikopasana – worship of another deity-Shiva.
• Devotee himself does direct worship. No mediator.	• Priest only worships. Priest the mediator. Devotee has to be satisfied with the mere sight.
• Philosophically Istalinga involves two principles (Precepts): 1) Linga-God-Absolute reality 2) Anga-Individual, Soul-Inner Panchasutra Linga.	• Philosophically represents Shiva a great Yogi.
• Istalinga helps for Socio-Religious brotherhood. It is preached that out any discrimination of caste creed and gender are equal.	• Sthavara Linga is not a means for establishing socio-religious equality. Among all Hindus worship static Lingas but follows caste differences.
• Istalinga is used as a means for concentration, Trataka Yoga-concentration through eye-sight.	• Sthavara Linga is only means to satisfy faith and not useful for Yoga Sadhana
• 10 Living body itself is the temple for Istalinga.	• Inanimate temple constructed is abode for Sthavara Linga.

One can adore it at any time, at any place, and for any length of time. This is like wristwatch or mobile phone.

7. Hindu and Lingayath religions

What is the real concept of Hindu religion? In which religion, castes will coincide? What are the laws applicable to the people belonging to religion and castes? These entire questions are very important. At

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present time. It is necessary to decide the systematized real concept, and which are the religious societies. We consider since so many centuries various different rituals are being practiced in various states. But it is difficult to decide whether a specific sect/group or society will come under Hindu religion or a different religion. However, the article leads us to think about Hindu society and Lingayath society. It is the known fact. It is not only the fact that the "the religion and society of Lingayath are the part of Hindu religion. It ventured to apply the laws by a special group "Shudra." By the virtue of this it has became routine as Lingayaths are untouchables (Shudras). This is illegal as well as unfair fact. So it's became necessary to take decision after discussion, because of its real concept, its specialty, and independency.

Concept of Hindu and Dravidian culture

The ancient books of Smrities- namely- Manu Smriti,Yagnvalka Smriti, vavahara Maukha and etc have taken into consideration to frame the Hindu religion on the basis of its thoughts and Practices which are the necessary ingredients. As these books are ancient, it is strange to consider them as model to the changed present situation. But it is true that they are models. As every one knows these books propose Chaturvarna (four fold casteism) of Varnashrama Dharma. The four fold cases are Brahmana, Kshatriy, Vaisya and Shudra. Out of these the first three fold got the right to have those 16 religious rights, which cannot reach the untouchables (Shudras) as they are not eligible for these rights. In addition, every woman is considered as untouchable (Shudra). It is a strange that the people belonging to first three fold are Dvijas, but their own females are untouchables (Shudra). It is very difficult consider fact as suitable. Untouchables (Shudra)s are the only servants of the first three. So the females are considered as the instruments to produce children and servants of the male.

Like this the casteism became routine. Firstly it was based on quality (Gunakarma), but further it became birth right. The Anuloma Pratiloma marriage system were banned. (Anuloma means higher caste male marrying lower caste female, opposite to this is Pratiloma). But the unusual lust resulted in marriage which paved way to the birth of many castes. Hindus of Varnashrama are now considered as special caste. Hindus become strange having 25 hundred various castes.

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Place of Lingayath is to be determined in this biggest Hindu society. To clarify this three relevant questions are to be solved.

- If Hindu religion is a religion, then what are its systematic features?
- What is the real concept of Lingayath religion? And whether it is independent of Hindu religion?

141. *Prof: M. R. Sakhare, in "Lingayath" monthly of June 1st, 2006 issue, Pub:Director, Lingayath research centre library, Naganuru Rudrakshi Matha, Shiva Basava Nagar, Belgavi- 590010*

- What are the relations between Hindu and Lingayath societies?

Forth coming discussion is based on these questions. Philosophical concept of Hinduism seems to be in various forms. In which countless castes and sub-castes are included. People belonging to different caste worship different Idols. Gods of different society are different mainly Shiva, Vishnu, Shakti. These three are the Gods worshipped by most of Hindus. The worshipper worships many-fold forms of Vishnu, and so only Shaktas worship Gouri, Laxmi, Kali etc,. Worshippers of Shiva are called "Shaiva". Worshippers of Vishnu are called Vaishnavas and worshippers of Shakti are called "Shakta". Some sub groups are there in "Shaiva" "Vaishnava" and "Shakta". In Shaivas also there are some groups. So Vaishnava groups also contain subgroups of Shakta groups. Effects on the people of various ethics, through from different Shaiva group, subgroups are also there. It is same in Vaishnavas and Shaktas also. It seems difficult to find common doctrine and practice out among of all the Shaiva, Vaishnava and Shakta. So, somebody says Hindu is not only a spiritual religion it is also a culture. As per their notion, Hindus, having thousand together castes, are to be considered as a political or social part of it. As per the notion of these type thinkers, Jain religion and Buddhism religions are the part of Hindu culture. In this view the word "Dharma" should be redefined and it should be given broad meaning. So is not acceptable as it is not suitable.

Is there any existence of a society without society? How is the existence of society without religion? Our notion is opposite to this. The religion is spiritual. Hindu religion is not only a culture; it is a special religion like Muslim, Christian and Jain religion. The four Purusharthas

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support our views, they are-

- Religion and the duties of commons.
- Earning wealth, or the substance for survival.
- Lust (Kama) or fulfillment of human desires.
- Moksha (liberty) or achieving oneness with God.

The concept called "Moksha" (liberation) is not found in other religions. So it is proved that the Hindu religion aims at achieving "Moksha" (liberation). Spiritual religion is nothing but having faith in the existence of non-human omnipotent power, which Generates, Organises and Destroys the universe, worshipping it through a special type of devotion is the ambition of human religion. Creating the nature and organizing the created nature, and destructing the same is known as ethics. And way of worship is called as practice. In any religion there should be two parts viz 1) Religious ethics, 2) Religious practice. These two parts are of a special type in Lingayath religion there fore it is different from other religions, and is the reason to be proud. Its discrimination will come later. Hindu religion may be defined very clearly as the religion which has undergone through Varnashrama and idol worshipping. It is not wrong, if Lingayath is said as a similar religion to the Hindu.

Another important fact is, most of us consider Hindu religion is Vedic and derived from Aryans. This is wrong. Because the reality differs. Prior to the arrival of Aryans, the Dravidians, who are the original residents of India, were the dense cultured citizens. Naturally there was struggle between Aryan and Dravidians. The struggle ended by the mingle of culture. Religion of Dravidians is very extreme than that of Aryans.

1. Aryans were the worshippers of nature power. Attaining grace through worshipping Earth power, Space power, and Wind power etc poly worship of nature powers etc were the religious features of Aryans. This worship was of offering Ahuti through fire. In short Aryans were fire worshippers. But Dravidians always worshipped the God who rule the nature. The Dravidians were worshippers of idols of these Gods.

2. Aryans preferred to perform Yagna at Yaga halls built on the bank of rivers. Dravidians worshiped idols at temples.

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3. Gods of Aryans were independent, they were selfish, self-explanative and opposite to each other. But God of Dravidians was only one who controlled every thing.

4. Gods of Aryans were representatives of nature power as Indra, Varuna (In charge of rain) Sun and so on. But God of Dravidian was Shiva. He has strange power.

5. Gods of Aryans always expected offering (Bali) by worshippers. They were unable to full fill the desires of devotee without offering (Bali) but God of Dravidian expected only pure devotion of devotees. Like these multi, differences there are lots of differences. Struggle between this differenciative people was continued for long period. It affected both. Therefore, Dravidians accepted Varnashrama, and Aryans chose the worship of natural powers. Like this the union of religion and culture is nothing but spiritual religion of present day. Dravidians religion is being described in eminent Agamas. In these Agamas there is full of Dravidian culture. Let me explain clearly.

1. Present spiritual Hindu religion is having Varnashrama with Idol worshipping. It is religion of equality having thousands of caste systems, a strange culture having various colors of together.

2. Varnashrama is of Aryans. But Idol worship is of Dravidians, procedures of Idol worship are explained in detailed in Agama texts of Dravidians.

3. By the interconnection of these two cultures, ancient Indian people got many similarities.

4. Sixteen consecration of Agamas became the rights of the people of first three Verna people. No consecrations were left for women and Shudras, so they got only Idol worship.

5. Further for time being various sects and sub-sects like Shaiva, Vaishnava, and Shakta came into existence. Ethical practices of these sect-sub sects are remaining differently.

This is brief concept of Hindu religion, now we explain the differences between Hindu religion and Lingayath religion, by which the specialties of Lingayath religion will proves its independent existence.

The differences not only show the different identities of Hinduism and Lingayathism but also the following qualities of Lingayathism. They are.

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1. Hindu religion has Varnashrama. Lingayath religion doesn't have Varnashrama. Lingayath religion is entirely different from Hindu because it has completely left out the Varnashrama.

2. In Lingayath religion there is only one consecration called "Deeksha" because it left away 16 consecrations as well as "Varnashrama system" of Hindus.

3. Lingayath religion kept its door ever open. Anybody can accept this religion. No superiority and inferiorities are here. Every one is equal. Hindu religion is not so, there is right to consecration by birth only. Born to be Hindu is by good fate. Males of first three Vernas are only able to have human religious consecration. Otherwise servantship is sure in his fate. But in Lingayath religion any one can be accepted by sanctification. Therefore, there is full of world-relative ness in Lingayath religion.

4.In Lingayath religion women can have freedom/union with God (Mukti) because they have given to religious rights, whereas in Hindu religion women do not have consecration.

5. Linga worn on the body is not Idol. So Lingayaths are not Idol worshippers. Linga adopted on body is not a small fixed (Sthavara) Linga. It is physical God. So there is no need of invocation of deity (Ahavana) or donation/existence (Visarjana). Fixed (Sthavara) Linga is representative or Idol of Esa/Eshwar only. Istalinga itself is the supreme reality of God.

6. Worship of wore Linga is called as "Ahamgrahopasana". In this worship devotee tends to worship Esha as "He is God, God is he". God is friend of devotee, his protector, and instructor, and he is always along with devotee. This Ahamgrahopasane is called as "Sahamarga" in Agamas. But Hindu religion has Sampadupasane, Pratimaor Prikopasane and Nirgunopasane. The last one is final worship of Hindu.

7. Religious practice of Lingayaths is called as "Shivayoga" the Yoga of high standard. This consists of all other Yogas i.e., Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga, Jnaana Yoga, MantraYoga and Laya Yoga (Raja Yoga). These sub-organs (Upanga) are convenient to four way initial ties (Swabhava) of human beings. The four own states(initials) are 1) Emotion base, for this there is Bhakti Yoga, 2) Virtual/practice base, for this there is Karma Yoga, 3) Thought base, for this there is Jnana Yoga. 4) Invisible base, for

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this their is Mantra Yoga.

8. The way of "ShivaYoga" is called as "Shatasthala". Shivayoga is nothing but worship of Linga (Linga Puje). Shatsthala system is the unique feature of Lingayath religion. This is not found in any religion.

9. "Doctrine of Shatsthala" is complete proven doctrine as it is based on the theory human body and mind. Six Lingas stay at suitable six places of main base of physical body. This internal worship of Linga will be achieved by outer worship of Istalinga and it develops internal power. So devotee will get salvation (Mukti).

Now let us observe the main tenets/Doctrines of Lingayath religion:

1) "Shakti Vishisthadvaita" is the doctrine of Lingayath religion. It means Parashiva (Supreme reality) has enriched his power (Chidrupa). Shiva and his power (Shakti) are one and the same. They are not at all different. This power/Shakti is called as Samhite or Vimarsha (AtmaVimarasha).

2) ShaktiVishistadvaita is greater than Kevaladvaita of "Shankaracharya". Shaktivishishthadvaita denies Shankaracharya's Mayavada. It contends that as per kevaladvaita sect supreme reality (Parabrahma) is away from viewable sight as it is bifurcated. Name of Nirupadhika Brahma is Kanthastha. This is a aliensubstance as Puruana of Sankhya.

3) As per the sect of Shankaracharya the power of Kothastha Brahma is the root cause for sorrowful life. But it is not mentioned where it comes and where does it exist. These are the two deficits of Mayavada. In shaktiVishishatadvaita these two deficits are eliminated. And in this the creation and destruction of world are being expressed in effective manner. Description regarding Ignorance or lack of knowledge is explained in detail. These are six ethics of 36 ethics, because of this Adhosrusti starts.

4) In Lingayath doctrine the name for salvation (Mukti) is "Smarasya" Samarasya is not Tadatma. Practioner of Shatastala can have this salvation (Mukti).

5) Nowadays proven materialism tends similar to Shaktivishistadvaita. Because there is nothing different in physical substance and its internal power. They are one and the same, and it is

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proved by materialism that they are two faces of a particle. This is theme of Shaktivisithadvaita.

Let us consider the differences between Lingayath religion and the other Shaiva religions. Here is a routine illusion that the Lingayaths are special Shaivas as they worship Shiva in the form of Linga. This is quite opposite fact. It is clear by the following facts, how far it is false and these facts help us to realize how Hindu religion and Lingayath religions are different.

1) Main God of Lingayath religion is Linga. Second name of Linga is Shiva. Ghana Linga is mere worship able God. This is main cause for world. It is called as 'Parakarana'. His power is named after Adimaya, Mahamya, Sudhamaya, this Adimaya gives birth to world by the order of Ghana Linga. From this power, (Shakti) only ethics come out. Adhomaya, sixth ethics of Shankaracharya is equallent to ignorance; Ghana Linga is called as Parasthala means, the place of start and the world (universe). In this Parasthala nature is created and it gets end within. By way of Pralaya.

2) As told in every Shastra of Vedanta, there is description (Leele) of Ghanalinga in Lingayath doctrine. This description (Leele) is called as Upasakopasaka. By this Ghanalinga becomes biform (Dvividha).1) Linga is deity of worship (Upasya), 2) Anga is worshipper; firstly this deity of worship (Upasya) in three parts. 1) Bhavalinga (emotion Linga) 2) Prnalinga (Linga in the form of life) 3) Istalinga (Linga accepted by willing).after that these three Lingas get in two types. They are 1) Mahalinga and 2) Prasada Linga, These are two types of Bhavalinga. 3) Charalinga and 4) Shiva Linga are two types of Pranalinga at the beginning Anga becomes three types and later becomes six. 1) Two varieties of Yogangas are 1) Aikya (union) 2) Sharana. Similarly 2) two varieties of Bhoganga are 1) Prana Linga 2) Prasadi 3) Two varieties of Tyaganaga. 1) Maheshwara, 2) Bhakta (devotee) as mentioned above at the time of creation (Leele) Ghanalinga at the time of achieving 6 varieties (Shat Prakara), the inseparable (avinabhava) power becomes three varieties, further it become six varieties (Shadvidha). Then it gets the name as art (Kale). Three varieties (trividhi) and as per Linga. That Linga became six equal types. Those six types 1) the light (Prakasha) Sakala and its two types. 1) Shantytetothara kala 2) Shantatithkala 2)

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Vimarshakala (enquiring art) and its two variety, 1) Art of peace (Shanti kala), 2) Vidyakala) Art of Education); Abhyasakala (Art of exercise) are its two varieties 1) Praqtjistha or knowledge 2) Nivrati or action, this power Shakti is formed by devotional form of Ghanalingas body. Devotion gets two varieties 1) Samarasa equal Partition) devotion. Devotion of bliss (Ananada Bhati) 2) devotion of the thought and its two types 1) Experience (Anubhava) 2) Avadhana (consideration) remembering. Devotion of obedience and its two types 1) Nishta (firmness) 2) Art of faith leads to union with Linga. Devotion leads to unification of body (Anga). Living being's desire of salvation/union (Moksha) is body (Anga). His body takes shape of Linga while in Yoga. So the ambition of living person is having the body along with the Chaitanya of Istalinga.

Big part of brain (Cerebrum) becomes the place for thinking (Budhi). It is called Sahasrar Chakra. Power of Gods Chaitanya lies in it. This thoughtful stamina (Chaitanya) is nothing but Yoganaga. Branches of centre mind and are circulated in every part of body. In these, Chaitanya (alertness) lies. These are called Chakra. These Chakras have six types of Ghanalinga in the six form of Linga (Shadvidha) first articulation (Granthi) is in between two brows. This is Agna Chakra, in which Mahalinga stays. Articulator staying at throat having complete pure chakra that bears Prasada Linga. These two organs are thinking feeling Bhavalinga, there are (Tatsadrassya) worshippers of two type Angas, Aikaya and Sharana; first two powers belong to Mahalinga and Prsada Linga. First two arts(kale) of power includes two Lingas viewable powers belonging to Maha Linga and Prasada Linga and two types of devotion(includes union and bliss) is for worship of duo-body is placed in those Linga, the two types of power get to two types of body (Angas). Similarly Anahata Chakra in the heart, Hrutkamala and the two types of Charalingas are there. At Nabhi (Navel) having, name Manipura Chakra and Shiva Linga. Pranalinga and of those two lies in independent nerves system of the structure of body. According to these two Linga and two Art of powers (Shantikala & Vidyakala) art of peace and art of education are included. The bodily (Bhogaanga) part having duo part (Pranalingi, Prasadi) at the material Physical body, (Sukshma Sharir) is worshipping it, materialistic and at subtle body is worshipped in subtle way. So he is worshipper of Linga in two ways, for him the reasonong

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devotion(Vicharadhare) is related to worship and for his two types of devotion two types (Anubhava, Avadhana) are concerned. Similarly Swadhistana and Muladhara Chakras are there. Two physical Istalingas namely Guru Linga and Acharya Linga and Acharyas are there. Linga and its dual body (Maheshwara and Bhakta) two are related to two types of Istalinga and its types. The two powers (Jnana and Kriya) knowledge and action of Basava are concerned with Linga artificial dual devotion (Nista/firmness, Srudha/Faith) arte related.

There are differences in Lingayath and other Shaivas never have relations.

Shaivas are the worshippers of fixed (Sthavara) Linga, the Idol of Varnashrama. The conclusive doctrine cannot be taken out as Veerashaivas doesn't have the supporting ethics and practices. So Lingayaths are not part of Veerashaiva similarlly it proves there is not at all relation. Having different practices and religious doctrines, it is proved absolutely that the religion is different.

Though non-killing (Ahimsa) may not be main ethics of Lingayaths as Jain sect; the ethics of Ahimse (not killing) is fully available in Lingayath religion. "There is no religion without mercy" has been established in Lingayath religion is worth ever remembering. Moreover Lingayaths never forgotten. So Lingayaths are pure vegetarians and in this religion alcohol is restricted and consumption of intoxicating substances is also strictly prohibited.

This non-violence, prohibition of intoxication, the feeling of equality of Varnashrama, equal rights provided to women and men regarding religion, kindness to every human being without making discriminations, constructed on the basis of science of the body and mind, showing the Shatsthala pathway in the progress of every one. etc lie in their own self. One must work for their own self, including different Yogas in single system as Shiva Yoga, inspiring to achieve divinity while being worldly life, bringing everybody towards spiritual way, having the latest development of equality with emotion (Principle of communism) as the Kayaka is the complete way of life, Lingayath religion has very easy ideas of worship as per individual emotions/feelings etc. The saying Lingayath is part of Hindu is of wrong as the Hindu religion is quite opposite to above all. So Lingayath religion is not at all part of Hindu

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religion. It has high quality and world kin ethics. Hence we can proudly consider that Lingayath is unique and independent religion.

Let us see what are the relations between Hindu and Lingayath. It is correct that ancestors of Lingayaths are Hindus, before inception of Lingayath religion. They are not foreigners who came from other countries as Persians. Or they are not bifurcated by the other religious consecration as Christians. accepted the religion born in their own country, equated the differences of superior and inferior feelings of Hindu peoples. The Hindus who bifurcated themselves are but Lingayaths. These are the relations, but these are not mentality of taking complete divorce from Hindus and exaggerating with extravaganza of independent religion is not belonging to Hindu. (In this subject Lingayath are similar to Jains) Jains are born in this country, but they avoid hurting Hindu religion. Became famous by adopting the ethics of non-violence, established by Mahatma Mahaveer. They are Hindu's as per heredity. But Jain's by religion. Similarly Lingayath's are Hindus as per they genetics, but by the religion they are Lingayaths.

Let us take another example. The Aryans of nowadays are followers of Veda. Religion of Varnashrama. But their Varnashrama is not birth right. It is to be said as per Jnana Karma. And Idol worship is Non-Vedic there fore they dropped it. So nowadays casteism must not exist by specific birth thats why they intend to stand apart.

Hence it is easy to understand what is the theme of a Hindu. Lingayath religion is Ativarnashrama Dharma and Lingayaths are Ativarnashramis. Maritontadarya has supported it and proved it effectively in Verashaivaananda Chandrike, and so by Vedic religions (Charvaka, Buddha Saugutadi) and by the religions having Varnashrama (Shaiva, Vaishnava, Shakta etc) proved as entire different, this is very happy thing never to be forgotten.

Lingayaths have the name Aprakruta Brahmana, it means accepting natural good worshipped idol lead to be undergo to Prukriti. By leaving it Aprakruta means outcome from Prakruti and worshipper of Istalinga is meaning full name goes to Lingayaths. But rejecting this and expecting towards Brahminism is nothing but rejecting the sweet Amruta in the palm and struggling to have bitter juice of Neem. This is our strong faith.

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8. Solicitous request to Lingayaths

Lingayathism is not a caste-sect-group it is a complete and independent religion, Found by Vishvaguru Basavanna (1134-196). Masses consider it as a caste/group of Hinduism. It is false. To prove its independence some important symptoms are presented as following:

1) Guru of religion (founder)	:	Vishvaguru Basavanna
2) Religious literature	:	Equality propounding Vachana literature
3) Religious God	:	Lingadeva
4) Religious Doctrine (Siddanta)	:	Sunya Siddanta
5) Religious Yoga	:	Linganaga Yoga
6) Religious Philosophy (Darshana)	:	Shatsthala
7) Religious Symbol	:	Symbol of creator, Istalinga
8) Religious Centre	:	Death place of Vishvaguru Basavanna
9) Religious Yearly congregation	:	Sharana Mela
10) Religious Observance (Vruta)	:	Sharana Vruta
11) Religious Flag	:	Six angled figure having Isatalinga and name of Basava
12) Religious Consecration	:	Isatlinga Deekshe
13) Religious Prayer hall	:	Basava Mantapa
14) Religious Worship able things	:	Guru (Basavanna), Linga (Istalinga) and Jangama (priest of religion)
15) Religious Process	:	Sharana Patha (process, way)
16) Religious Meet	:	Sharana Sangama (weekly prayer)
17) Religious Month	:	Shravana
18) Religious Language	:	Kannada
19) Religious Heritage	:	Sharana Heritage

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20) Religious Fraternity	:	Equality without Caste. Creed and groups
21) Religious Vision	:	Formation of (construction of) society casteless, creedless, classification less, along with religion.

Lingaythism is not a part of Hinduism, because it is found by Guru Basavanna. It doesn't follow Veda-Agama, Shruti-Smruti. It contends Homa-Havana, Yagna-Yaga. It doesn't offer the animals. It considers every human being as equal. It doesn't worship any other than Guru, Linga and Jangama. Worship of tree, snake, ox and etc., is restricted.

Constitutional Recognition as independent Religion

142. *A hand bill Jointly Published by Basava Dharma Peetha, Mahamane Maha Matha KoodalaSangama.-587 115. Tq Hunuguda. Dt Bagalkot. Karnataka. Lingayatha Dharma Mahasabha, Basava Mantapa, Rajajingar Bangalore-560010. Karnataka state. Reprinted by Rastryeeya Basava Dala, Bidar-585401 District Committee. Karnataka state*

As per the above mentioned aspects, Lingayath Religion has its own Doctrine (Siddanta), achievements, Philosophy (Darshana), Consecration, literature, culture, Heritage and etc., Constitutional Recognition as independent Religion is most essential. As Indian born religions like Jain, Boudh, and Sikhs have independent fold of religion, So also, Lingayathism must also try to get constitutional recognition.

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II Aims and objective of organizations

1. Basava Dharma Peetha ®

Basava Dharma Peetha®, Maha Mane Maha Matha, Kudalasangama-587115. Tq: Hungunda, Dist Bijapur, now Bagalkot. Karnataka. The brief introductory brochure for followers of Lingayathism to adopt latest reforms, as the need of the relevant time is printed in the form of a small book.

The book insists strongly that the Astavarana's are Angaswaroopi (form of the body); Shatsthalas are Atma Swaroopi (form of Soul); To Panchacharas one more "Basavachara" is added to strengthen firmness towards Guru Basaveshwara, the founder of Lingayathism, representative of God who came to earth to save humanism, and to propagate the ethics (proponed by Guru Basaveshwara). Shadacharas are Prana Swaroopi (form of Life).

It proposes new six formulas (Shat Sutra) to understand basic tenants, and fixes/remembers goal of the religion.

They are

1) Dharma Guru (founder of religion): Vishva Guru Basaveshwara,
2) Dharma Samhite (Literature of the Religion): Vachana literature,
3) Dharma Lanchana (Symbol of the Religion): Istalinga the symbol of Creator,
4) Dharma Kshetra (Pilgrim-Place of the religion): Koodalasangama the place where guru Basava achieved oneness with the god,
5) Dharma Dhwaja (Religious flag): Shatkona (Hexagonal) along with the symbol of Istalinga and having the letters of Sri Guru Basava,
6) Dharma Dhyeya (Vision of the religion): formation of (construction of) casteless, creedless, classification less, society.

New Six Sheelas: (code of conducts). And they are

1) Faith in Lingadeva; one should have faith in existence of creator and believe that he is the supreme power. He is worshipped, prayed, meditated in the form of Istalinga.
2) Faith in the prophet, Sri Guru Basaveshwara is representative of God and worship, pray to him.

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3) Faith in the religious literature: Vachana literature given by the Guru Basaveshwara and his contemporaries is to be considered as the religious literature, and should be studied and practiced in the real life.

4) Faith in the social consecrations (programs): one should consider that the participating in following is the compulsory duty: Daily *Istalinga Archane* (daily worship to *Istalinga*), daily evening prayer at 7pm, common weakly prayer (*Sharana Sangama*), "*Gana Mela*" local program arranged on *Shivaratri, "Sharana Mela"* a great annual religious congregation and etc,.

5) Faith in *Kayaka-Dashoha*: adopt work as the worship to the god whole heartedly and spend the part of earning towards the service of religion-society.

143. *Page no 5-7 of Introduction of "Aim and objectives". Introductory book published by Basava Dharma Peetha ®. Maha Mane Maha Matha, Kudalasangama-587115. Tq: Hungunda, Dist Bijapur, now Bagalkot. Karnataka.*

6) faith in the *Sharana Mela*: Accept Koodala Sangama (the place where guru Basava got education, knowledge, invented *Istalinga* and spent last days and achieved oneness with god) as the religious pilgrim-Place and participate in the *Sharana Mela* " a great annual religious congregation, by which one should recognize the religious follow ship.

Shatkriye: (six actions)

1) *Aachara* (Practice): Develop holy faiths and feelings internally, spend life as per the aspects preached in Vachana literature,

2) *Arivu* (knowledge): have the knowledge of the god and soul,

3) *Lingaprema* (love towards God) One should develop humble love towards the God rather than fear. Bhakti (devotion) is nothing but the divinized love,

4) *Jangama Seve* (service to the sheers, preachers): Jangama (Sheers) is the guide to the divinity, pure soul with firmness. Every Lingayath should serve the pure Jangama by body, mind and money,

5) *Prasada Shuddi* (offering food to the god): food must be simple,

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pure and honest, and offered to God before taken,

6) *Dashoha* (devotedness): every follower should reserve some part of his earning, and offer it to propagate the religion, and spend towards the needy persons in the society.

The theme/base of Lingayathism Asthavarana, Shadachara, Shatsutra, Shatsthala, Shatkriye and Shatsheela are prefixed numerically "866666" and advised to write on the top of every writing.

Ambitions

1) Purification and renewal of society, and its practices.
2) Providing Guidelines in resolving many social problems.
3) Sanctifying the masses through prayers and camps.
4) Constructing prayer halls across the state and farming the prayer groups.
5) Research in Vachana literature, study, translating, taking Vachana literature to Commons by publishing literature.
6) Providing progressive thinking to those indulge in practice of superstitions, and harassed in the name of religion, let them to have true knowledge about the religion.
7) Providing Dashooha (free feeding/ divine food), medical help etc., at drought-bad situations.
8) Introducing the Sharana culture through library, museums etc.
9) Protecting, developing the holly places related to Sharanas
10) Developing spiritual interest, awareness of duty, nationality by organizing Rastreeya Basava Dala.
11) Opening the training institute of religious preachers.
12) Protect and arrange to avail published religious literature.
13) Train the persons to perform marriages, naming ceremonies, carnation, house blessings, funeral etc. according to the Sharana ethics.
14) Celebrating birthday of Basava (Basava Jayanti), death day (Basava Lingaikya) at holly places and birthdays other Sharanas.
15) Arranging the prayer-preachingcamp of knowledge, divine food (Dashoha) at every full moon of the month.

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16) Organizing "Sharana Mela" on 14th January, of every year on behalf Basava Kranti day (establishing day of Lingayathism). This is to be celebrated as the world level congregation of Lingayaths and well-wishers of Lingayaths.

In addition, it has so many ambitions; it plans have been made to practice them. Nayayanga-Shasakanga- Karyanga (Judicial-regulatory-working bodies)

Basava Dharma Peetha has made an important decision to fulfill the deficiency of a stage to frame practices, guidelines to practice the ethics to the followers of Basavanna's ethics, or Lingayaths. Helping to take decisions, Basava Dharma Peetha framed Basava Dharma Samsattu (council) and Rastreeya Basava Dala as coorganizations/ supporting bodies.

Basava Dharma council consists of Sharana's who follow the ethics with firm mindset from all the states, it discusses about religion, society, literature and culture, etc. and it discusses about all other subjects. It makes amendments wherever feel necessary. Basava Dharma Peetha announces the decision of the Shasakanga regulatory body. Rastreeya Basava Dala practices it as the working force (Karyanga).

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2. Rastreeya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS)

Concept: Hindu society is the oldest generation of the world. Hinduism is known as Indian life style, which is developing as per need of time. Hinduism only is the Indian nationality. India will remain as India only by Hindus. All the generations of this land are Hindus. India will get strength, welfare of universe achieved only by the unity of Hindus. This is the faith of Rastreeya Swayam Sevaka Sangh.

Establishment:

Established on 27-09-1925, holy day of Vijaya Dashami of Krodhana Samvatsara, By Dr; Keshava Baliram Hegadevaar. He was a patriot by birth. Doctor by education, but he was the great person who devoted his whole life for the sake of nation. He was revolutionary in student life, and active at agitation of Congress. He founded Sangh on the strength of knowledge got by agitation of independence. He gave organized form to nationality and Hindu organization for glorious achievement to the life.

Working procedure:

Aim of the Sangh is to build self-reliant, rich, and powerful India. For that first step is creating the persons of good character, every one bodily fit, mentally stable and give well cultured minds, achieve the personal development along with the welfare of the society. The unique way to achieve these of Sangh is known as daily Shakha.

Extension of work:

The RSS established at Nagpur of Maharastra with only few youths by Dr Hegdevar now became the wide flood flow of national power. It becomes world's only powerful non-government organization. It has the branches at every taluka including the states of Uttarranchal and Kashmir, active at villages and populations living forests (Adivasi areas) also. 50,000and above branches are working in 35,000city-villages.

Work of Volunteers (Swayam Sevaks)

Volunteers who got inspiration from the Sangh are working at various fields of society towards the welfare of the national interest, and succeeding in emancipating Hindu society every where. Volunteers are playing significant role in converting Hindus staying abroad and convert them as ambassadors of our culture.

Service work:

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144. *Introductory brochure (pamphlet) of Rastreeya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS). Printed on the occasion of 100th birth celebration of Guruji (founder of RSS, Sri Madhavarao Sadashivrao Golavalkar 1906-1973). By Shri Guruji Janmashatabdi Samiti, Karnataka. 'Madukunja', Jayachamarajnagar, Hubballi-580 020.Karnataka*

So-many service works are taken up by the Sangh to help the least, unable and poor people, orphan centers, blood bank, hospital, cultural camps, service to leprosy patients, free hostels for students, unofficial education centre etc. 75,000 and more service activities are running at including slums of the city, villages of far away distances and even (Vanvasi's) camps in the forests.

National public agitations:

After the independence, to awake the nationality, Sangh has taken up protest to protect cow (Go Raksha), Goa liberation protest, stone statue of Vivekananda, rebuilding the Ram Mandir at Ayodhya, and protest of Swadeshi, and so on. Sangh has taken responsibility of arranging the agitations against emergency in 1975, and protect democracy.

Defence of the nation:

At the bad days after partition of nation in 1947, at the war time against China in 1962 and at all the wars against Pakistan, Sangh has played a very significant role to increase the mental power of the people of nation and save Kashmir.

Help at the situation of sorrow:

Service work of the volunteers belonging to the Sangh at accident of Morvi, flood at Andhra and Orissa, earthquake at Latur and Gujarat, accident of Tsunami, has introduced the Sangh to the whole world.

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Annexure- B

Documentary Evidences and News Cuttings

1) **Lingayath Population at Census of India 1891**
2) **Subsidiary tables Census of India 1901**
3) **Firmness to Lingayath religion**
4) **Gazetteer of Mysore State**
5) **History of Lingayath religion**
6) **Kittel Dictionary meanings**
7) **Lingayath an Independent religion**
8) **Enthovans Information**
9) **Definition of Dharma (Religion): Swami Vivekananda**

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has very little meaning."* Speaking of the three main sects in Baroda Mr. Dalal says: "The followers of neither are exclusive; they pay homage to all the deities, but are bound more to the special deity of their cult." In Bihar:—

"The dividing line between Sáktas and Vaishnavas is less clearly defined, and, except in the case of certain ascetics, the worship of one God is not necessarily exclusive of that of another, as it is in Bengal proper, where a strict Vaishnava will not even name Káli and Durgá, or the leaves of the Bel tree, which are largely used in connection with the religious ceremonies of the Sáktas. The reason seems to be that Bihar was never so deeply infected as Bengal with the worst forms of Sákta worship, and that the Vaishnava revival of Chaitanya, which represented a revulsion from Sáktism, never spread thither."

The Census Statistics of sect.

638. The collection of information regarding sect at the census was optional with Local Governments. For the reasons given above it was not attempted in Bengal or Madras, but in several of the other provinces the compilation of the return was undertaken. The results, however, are not very conclusive. In Assam and Baroda sect seems to have been more or less fully returned, but in Assam Mr. Allen doubts if much reliance can be placed on the results. In the Central Provinces less than 1 Hindu in 9 named any sect, in the United Provinces less than 1 in 5 and in Bombay less than 1 in 4. The figures cannot, therefore, be used to trace the general sectarian distribution of the people, but they have nevertheless a distinct value as drawing attention to the various forms of religious belief which exist, and they also, in the case of recent or specially vigorous sects, afford some indication of the actual number of their followers. They clearly bear out the truth of what has been stated above as to the want of recognition, on the part of the people themselves, of the conventional sectarian distinctions and in the United Provinces only 1 Hindu in 11 declared himself to be a Saiva or Vaishnava by sect. It is probable that even these had no clear idea as to the distinctive tenets connoted by the above names, beyond the vague theory that a Saiva may eat meat and a Vaishnava may not, and that many of the persons thus entered owe it to the fact that the sects in question were given in the instructions as illustrations of the kind of entry required, and they were, therefore, often copied in the schedules merely because the enumerators and enumerated were both at a loss to think of anything more appropriate. In view of the partial character of the return and of the impossibility of giving a comprehensive review of so vast a subject within the limits of a Census Report it is not proposed to discuss it here. The figures for some of the more important of the sects returned, other than the conventional divisions of Sákta, Vaishnava,† etc., are noted in the margin, and, if further details are required, reference can be made to the various provincial reports, many of which contain much interesting information on the subject.‡

Assam.			
Mahápurushia	485,653		
Central Provinces.			
Kabirpanthi	493,393	Satnámi	389,599
Nánakpanthi	12,800		
United Provinces.			
Páncbpiriya	1,760,363	Ramanandi	1,317,560
Lingáyat	1,065,053	Bishnoi	289,407
Nánakshábi	241,316	Kabirpanthi	215,771
Pasupat	88,242	Vallabhacharya	87,178
Satnámi	73,917	Radhavallabhi	43,694
Gorakpanthi	32,244	Nimbarak	18,964
Rádhaswámi	15,375	Sivanaraini	6,599
Bombay.			
Lingáyat	870,729	Nánakshábi	157,577
Daryapanthi	112,655	Ramanand	97,405
Vallabhachari	80,331	Swaminarayan	42,400
Manbhav	19,430	Kabirpanthi	9,407
Central India Agency.			
Ramanandi	155,730	Kabirpanthi	124,600
Bhairon	67,191	Ganeshji	64,078
Pretpujak	38,391	Lalbegi	21,786
Bhairava	20,776	Ruidas	14,314
Narsinghji	8,613		

639. The forms of worship vary and sects are numerous, but the actual religious ideas which underlie the outward ceremonial are much more uniform than might be supposed. In belief, though seldom perhaps in practice, most Hindus

* Madras Census Report, 1891, paragraph 119.

† In the United Provinces Mr. Burn shows that the alleged number of Ramanandis has risen from 491,438 to nearly three times this number, merely because it was the first of a few sects given as examples in the rules.

‡ Sir Denzil Ibbetson's account of the religions of the Punjab in the Provincial Census Report of 1881 is well known, and Mr. Maclagan's Report on the Census of 1891 in the same province gives an admirable review of a number of the leading sects, which has been supplemented by Mr. Rose on the present occasion. Mr. Russell in the Central Provinces deals at some length with the Kabirpanthis, Satnámis and other sects which are locally numerous. Mr. Enthoven in Bombay gives a full account of the Lingáyats, and Mr. Dalal in Baroda of the various religious divisions found in Gujarát. The Bengal Report contains an account of the Kartábhajás, Seo Náráyanis and other sects; that of the Rádhaswámis is discussed in the Report for the United Provinces, that of the Dádupanthis in the Rajputana Report, and so on.

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SUBSIDIARY TABLE IV-*concld.*

Distribution of 1,000 of each age and sex by civil condition for the main castes-*concld.*

DISTRIBUTION OF 1,000 MALES OF EACH AGE BY CIVIL CONDITION																		CASTE
TOTAL			0-5			05-Dec			Dec-20			20-40			40 AND OVER			
Unmarried	Married	Widowed	Unmarried	Married	Widowed	Unmarried	Married	Widowed	Unmarried	Married	Widowed	Unmarried	Married	Widowed	Unmarried	Married	Widowed	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38
KASHMIR																		
462	430	108	999	1	...	647	348	5	554	364	82	111	724	165	12	710	278	Bráhman
243	535	222	1,000	...	...	603	376	21	272	581	147	...	728	272	...	631	369	Rajput
263	489	248	1,000	...	...	970	30	...	284	505	211	...	761	239	...	525	475	Dar, M
427	445	128	1,000	...	...	987	13	...	292	553	155	1	767	232	...	781	219	Maliar, M
298	468	234	1,000	...	...	1,000	...	...	253	558	189	...	718	282	...	626	374	Kashmiri, M
345	569	86	1,000	...	...	1,000	...	...	364	361	275	...	761	239	...	966	34	Bashkan, M
MYSORE																		
272	465	263	1,000	...	...	826	172	2	47	898	55	3	747	250	1	325	674	Bráhman
386	423	191	999	1	...	935	64	1	387	593	20	16	822	162	6	396	598	Agasa
376	426	198	999	1	...	9S6	63	1	332	643	25	17	805	178	6	385	609	Panchala
391	399	210	998	2	...	942	57	1	472	503	5	37	782	181	7	384	609	Golla
384	421	195	999	1	...	940	59	1	452	530	18	7	829	154	5	3S6	609	Kuruba
411	399	190	1,000	...	...	944	55	1	454	523	23	86	749	165	51	404	545	Beda
372	417	211	999	1	...	940	57	3	391	576	33	43	778	179	24	380	596	Banajiga
381	393	226	999	1	...	955	44	1	425	550	25	14	777	209	7	327	666	Lingayat
382	429	189	998	2	...	950	48	2	373	595	32	15	818	167	4	437	559	Neygi
380	415	205	1,000	...	...	951	48	1	442	538	20	31	804	165	6	337	607	Yakkaliga
451	402	147	1,100	...	...	956	43	1	520	460	20	99	778	123	43	486	471	Uadiga
412	414	174	1,000	...	...	966	43	1	442	539	19	46	822	132	31	391	578	Bestha
422	399	179	1,000	...	...	965	35	...	480	500	20	23	829	148	10	374	616	Uppara
428	429	143	1,000	...	...	961	38	1	513	472	15	33	857	110	5	507	488	Vadda
414	416	170	1,000	...	...	968	31	1	527	453	20	60	798	142	26	458	516	Holaja
422	420	158	999	1	...	971	28	1	506	479	15	35	826	139	10	518	472	Tigala
487	404	109	1,000	...	...	977	22	1	613	383	4	16	910	74	5	515	480	Lambani
RAJPUTANA																		
298	564	138	999	1	...	760	235	5	157	795	48	8	897	95	1	503	496	Chamar (Hindu)
348	495	157	985	14	1	874	121	5	318	648	34	30	789	181	6	557	437	Jat (Hindu)
286	481	233	997	3	...	867	128	5	330	618	52	9	771	220	3	419	578	Bráhman (Hindu)
281	474	245	996	4	...	891	105	4	390	554	56	20	738	242	4	429	567	Rajput (Hindu)
303	486	212	995	4	1	901	95	4	357	599	44	9	735	256	3	526	471	Mahajan (Hindu)
365	471	164	997	3	...	934	63	3	188	776	36	9	749	242	4	578	418	Gujar (Hindu)
281	461	258	988	12	...	927	69	4	322	599	79	17	747	236	5	342	653	Mahajau (Jain)
309	514	177	991	8	1	927	69	4	303	643	54	17	761	222	6	626	368	Mina (Hindu)
379	439	182	977	23	...	954	43	8	608	327	65	51	752	197	12	433	555	Bbil (Animist)
405	474	121	1,000	...	...	953	46	1	462	532	6	17	909	74	0	526	469	Meo (Musalman)
283	448	269	952	48	...	1,000		...	345	669	86	10	758	232	...	273	727	Charan (Hindu)
TRAVANCORE																		
446	451	103	1,000	...	...	987	13	...	511	483	6	36	894	70	14	512	474	Native Christian
840	436	224<																

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H.H. Risley and E.A. Gait , (1903), *REPORT ON THE CENSUS OF INDIA, 1901* , Calcutta , Superintendent of Government Printing , p. 130

130 CHAPTER III.SEX.

SUBSIDIARY TABLE V.

Number of females per 1,000 males in certain selected castes in the main Provinces.

Caste	Number of females to 1000 males	Caste	Number of females to 1000 males	Caste	Number of females to 1000 males	Caste	Number of females to 1000 males
BENGAL		**UNITED PROVINCES**		**MADRAS**		**BOMBAY**	
Provincial average	998	Provincial average	937	Provincial average	1,025	Provincial average	945
Ahir and Goala	979	Ahir	937	Balija	1,007	Agri	950
Babhan	999	Bania	924	Brahman	1,022	Baluchi	828
Bagdi	1,024	Brahman	923	Chakkiliyan	1,014	Bhil	980
Brahman	987	Chamar	986	Golla	1,000	Brahman	916
Chamar	1,024	Dhobi	945	Idaiyan	1,042	Chambhar or Mochi	959
Chasa	1,016	Gadaria	897	Kamma	994	Dhangar	974
Dosadh	1,039	Jat	852	Kammálan	1,022	Lingayat	985
Hajjam and Napit	1,005	Jolaha	982	Kápu	1,009	Koli	950
Jolaha	1,074	Kachbi	897	Mádiga	987	Kumbhar	990
Kaibartta (Chasi)	1,008	Kahar	952	Mála	1,024	Kunbi	990
Kayastha	1,003	Kori	910	Máppilla	997	Mahar Holia or Dhed	1,006
Khandait	1,042	Kumbar	931	Native Christian	1,040	Mali	998
Koiri	1,027	Kurmi	970	Odde	994	Mang or Mading	1,016
Kurmi	1,013	Lodha	899	Pallan	1,077	Maratha	983
Nama Sudra	989	Murao	938	Palli	1,034	Rajput	919
Rajbansi (Koch)	936	Nai	926	Paraiyan	1,066	Sama	831
Rajput	971	Pasi	973	Shánán	1,022	Shekh	949
Santal	1,008	Pathan	956	Shekh	1,023	Soni	953
Tanti and Tatwa	1,000	Rajput	887	Tiyan	1,025	Sunar	956
Teli	1,017	Shekh	962	Vellála	1,030	Vani	903
PUNJAB AND NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROTINCE		**CENTRAL PROVINCES**		**BURMA**		**ASSAM**	
Provincial average	852	Provincial average	1,031	Provincial average	962	Provincial average	949
Arain	877	Ahir	1,106	Akha	913	Abom	961
Arova	842	Brahman	925	Arakanese	1,004	Brahman	812
Awan	873	Chamar	1,048	Burmese	1,039	Chutiya	957
Biloch	849	Dhimar	1,052	Chin	1,014	Das*	967
Brahman	838	Ganda	1,040	Chinese	324	Garo	988
Chamár	870	Gond	1,073	Danu	1,009	Jugi	989
Chuhra	860	Kalar	1,034	Hkûn	1,032	Kachari	954
Fakir	736	Kandh	1,036	Intha	1,058	Kaibartta	944
Gujar	839	Kewat	1,084	Kachin	1,032	Kalita	913
Jat	804	Koshti	991	Kadu	1,094	Kayastha	863
Jhinwar	859	Kunbi	1,013	Kami	886	Khasi	1,118
Juláha	865	Kunni	1,035	Karen	977	Khatri	1,013
Kanet	924	Lodhi	1,028	Palaung	976	Kotch	970
Khatri	797	Lohar	1,021	Shan	1,037	Mech	1,001
Kumhár	879	Mali	994	Siamese	8S6	Mikir	973
Mochi	883	Mehra	1,038	Talaing	981	Nadiyal	958
Nái	862	Nai	1,024	Taunythu	1,048	Naga	1,022
Pathán	875	Rajput	1,034			Namasudra	957
Rájput	861	Sawara	1,063			Rajbansi	965
Tarkhán	859	Teli	1,044			Shekh	941

*Includes Halwa Das, Sudra Das and Sudra.

H.H. Risley and E.A. Gait , (1903), *REPORT ON THE CENSUS OF INDIA, 1901* , Calcutta , Superintendent of Government Printing , p. 183

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SUBSIDIARY TABLE VI-*concld.*

Education by Selected Castes-*concld.*

Castes.	Number per 1,000						Number per 10,000 literate in English			Percentage of Proportion of literate on Corresponding Proportion for the whole Province.		
	Literate			Illiterate								
	Total.	Male.	Female.	Total.	Male.	Female.	Total.	Male.	Female.	Total.	Male.	Female.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.
MYSORE STATE.												
Brahman	376	681	64	624	319	936	528	1,022	21	737	732	800
Digambara	226	410	21	774	590	979	42	79	...	443	441	262
Panchala	93	177	4	907	823	996	9	17	...	182	190	50
Lingayat	73	142	4	927	858	996	7	13	...	143	153	50
Vakkaliga	21	41	1	979	959	999	4	7	...	22	44	12
Kuruba	11	21	1	989	979	999	1	3	...	22	41	12
Korama	10	17	2	990	983	998	...	...	...	20	18	25
Beda	10	18	1	990	982	999	2	4	...	20	19	12
Meda	8	16	...	992	984	1,000	...	...	...	16	17	...
Holaya	5	9	1	995	991	999	3	6	...	10	10	12
Lambani	1	1	1	999	999	999	...	...	...	2	1	12
TRAVANCORE STATE.												
Brahman (Malayali)	446	663	191	554	337	809	23	41	2	360	308	616
Ambalavasi	371	576	156	629	424	844	106	208	...	299	268	603
Kanian	295	519	55	705	481	945	...	2	...	238	241	177
Nayar	216	376	57	784	624	943	59	111	6	174	175	184
Native Christian	156	257	51	814	743	949	80	129	28	126	120	165
Kammala	124	233	14	876	767	986	3	6	...	100	108	45
Iluvan	73	137	10	927	863	990	4	7	...	59	64	32
Shanan	37	70	4	963	930	996	2	4	...	30	33	13

2.SUBSIDIARY TABLE VII.

Main results of University Examinations in 1801 and 1901.

Universities		Matriculation or entrance.		F.A. on intermediate examination, 1st B.A, 1st B. So.		Degrees.		Law.		Medicine.		Civil Engineering	
		Candidates	Passed	Candidates	Passed	Candidates	Passed	Candidates	Passed	Candidates	Passed	Candidates	Passed
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Calcutta	1901	5,814	3,131	3,510	1,125	2	415	578	166	506	208	62	19
	1891	*4,721*	*2,035*	*1,996*	*737*	*970*	*304*	*210*	*132*	*108*	*70*	*24*	*9*
Madras	1901	7,313	1,423	3,614	1,761	801	413	610	300	97	49	30	19
	1891	*7,002*	*1,648*	*2,600*	*1,027*	*508*	*263*	*130*	*40*	*94*	*22*	*10*	*1*
Bombay	1901	4,551	1,611	1,386	809	359	225	498	190	368	174	130	88
	1891	*3,804*	*1,090*	*1,050*	*435*	*224*	*107*	*85*	*39*	*178*	*84*	*108*	*56*
Allahabad	1901	1,860	810	526	197	315	190	59	8	...	...	564	351
	1891	*1,593*	*606*	*476*	*204*	*180*	*103*	*28*	*13*	...	...	*323*	*155*
Lahore	1901	2,315	1,312	527	244	376	138	387	181	116	62	...	...
	1891	*1,066*	*399*	*153*	*87*	*66*	*44*	...	...	*40*	*23*	...	...

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Bombaycolumns 23.Include for 1901 and 1891 respectively 983 examinees and 392 passed and 820 candidates and 331 passed in University School Final Examination.

Punjabcolumns 45.Include for 1901 5 candidates and 4 passed in Oriental learning.

Punjabcolumns 67.Include for 1901 and 1891 respectively 7 examinees and 4 passed and 5 examinees and 4 passed in Oriental learning.

W.Chichele Plowden , (1883), *Report on the Census of British India taken on the 17th February 1881* , London , Eyre and Spottiswoode , p. 279

Karan	106332	Koshti	315424
Kawa	1102255	Kumhar	2391148
Kawar	115559	Kummalen	784998
Kayasth	2161489	Kunbi	2661645
Kewat	521053	Kunbikadwa	334881
Khandait	617904	Kunbilewa	568038
Kharwar	211160	Kunbi Maratha	4610778
Khatik	192850	Kurmi	4123699
Kliatri	519373	Kuruba Grolla	180535
Khond	135960	Kusavan	263975
Koch	1878804	Kwumbar	114378
Kodula	244090	Lingayat	457221
Koeri	1207951	Lodli	1040724
Kol	363952	Lodhi	274392
Koli	917524	Lohana	348517
Koli Konkani	125949	Lohar	1803854
Kolimaratha	881014	Lonia	378619
Koli Talabda	661.865	Madak	308821
Komati	591639	Madigaru	734716
Kongavellalan	142933	Mahajun	634440
Kori	895744	Maliar	1435886

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Mahar and Dhed	1197730	Pareet	162137
Mai	145364	Pasi	1203383
Malayala Shudra	464260	Pod	325755
Mali	1286372	Poolayen	199119
Mallah	1161852	Powar	106081
Mang	576475	Pulli	1294982
Marar	184519	Raddi	654700
Marasa Yakkaligar	126168	Rajbansi	106376
Marathe or Araikulam	450781	Rajwar	131364
Mehra	231624	Sadgop	557950
Mina	433627	Sahora	103490
Moravan	256304	Saini	152632
Munurwar	187833	Sakkili	1126837
Mussahar	549524	Sale	206794
Mutrasi	104671	Sah or Salewaru	234618
Mutsatta	133141	Savarula	131469
Na Hambadi	106682	Sembadavan	100019
Nai	2045722	Setti	235303
Nair	336227	Shannan	1478694
Nath or Jugi	121901	Sivachar Gaudaru	259110
Nhavi or Hajam	242334	Sonar	979730
Nuniya	324063	Sonthal	210661
Oddan	363289	Sudra	385941
Ooriya	101199	Sunri	589021
Padivaoi	376847	Sutar	363198
Pakanati Kapu	107341	Taga	115920
Pan	251500	Tailanga	341264
Panchamsali	294567	Tamoli	320266
Parayen	3290038	Tanti	679958

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Tarkhan	596941	Vanian	339136
Tatwa	247865	Vannian	1075386
Teli	3219944	Vapparavan	104959
Teli and Ghanchi	200183	Velama	348830
Telugalu	613090	Vellalar	1627736
Teor	349117	Wanjari	767177
Vakkaligars	111732	Yadavalu	105426
Vanan	528458		

If you want more then you can search on the site: http://www.chaf.lib.latrobe.edu.au/dcd/search.php ok

SUBSIDIARY TABLES 467

SUBSIDIARY TABLE IV-*concld.*

Distribution of 1,000 of each age and sex by civil condition for the main castes-*concld.*

DISTRIBUTION OF 1,000 MALES OF EACH AGE BY CIVIL CONDITION

TOTAL			0-5			05-Dec			Dec-20			20-40			40 AND OVER			CASTE
Unmarried	Married	Widowed	Unmarried	Married	Widowed	Unmarried	Married	Widowed	Unmarried	Married	Widowed	Unmarried	Married	Widowed	Unmarried	Married	Widowed	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38
									KASHMIR									
462	430	108	999	1	...	647	348	5	554	364	82	111	724	165	12	710	278	Brihman
243	535	222	1,000	...	...	603	376	21	272	581	147	...	728	272	...	631	369	Rajput
263	489	248	1,000	...	...	970	30	...	284	505	211	...	761	239	...	525	475	Dar, M
427	445	128	1,000	...	...	987	13	...	292	553	155	1	767	232	...	781	219	Maliar, M
298	468	234	1,000	...	...	1,000	...	...	253	558	189	...	718	282	...	626	374	Kashmiri, M
345	569	86	1,000	...	...	1,000	...	...	364	361	275	...	761	239	...	966	34	Bashkan, M
									MYSORE									
272	465	263	1,000	...	...	826	172	2	47	898	55	3	747	250	1	325	674	Brihman
386	423	191	999	1	...	935	64	1	387	593	20	16	822	162	6	396	598	Agasa
376	426	198	999	1	...	956	63	1	332	643	25	17	805	178	6	385	609	Panchala
391	399	210	998	2	...	942	57	1	472	503	5	37	782	181	7	384	609	Golla
384	421	195	999	1	...	940	59	1	452	530	18	7	829	154	5	356	609	Kuruba
411	399	190	1,000	...	...	944	55	1	454	523	23	86	749	165	51	404	545	Beda
372	417	211	999	1	...	940	57	3	391	576	33	43	778	179	24	380	596	Banajiga
381	393	226	999	1	...	955	44	1	425	550	25	14	777	209	7	327	666	Lingayat
382	429	189	998	2	...	950	48	2	373	595	32	15	818	167	4	437	559	Nergi
380	415	205	1,000	...	...	951	48	1	442	518	20	31	804	165	6	337	607	Yakkaliga
451	402	147	1,100	...	...	956	43	1	520	460	20	99	778	123	43	486	471	Uadiga
412	414	174	1,000	...	...	966	43	1	442	539	19	46	822	132	31	391	578	Bestha
422	399	179	1,000	...	...	965	35	...	480	500	20	23	829	148	10	374	616	Uppara
428	429	143	1,000	...	...	961	38	1	513	472	15	33	857	110	5	507	488	Vadda
414	416	170	1,000	...	...	968	31	1	527	453	20	60	798	142	26	458	516	Holaja
422	420	158	999	1	...	971	28	1	506	479	15	35	826	139	10	518	472	Tigala
487	404	109	1,000	...	...	977	22	1	613	383	4	16	910	74	5	515	480	Lambani
									RAJPUTANA									
298	564	138	999	1	...	760	235	5	157	795	48	8	897	95	1	503	496	Chamar (Hindu)

3. Firmness is to be taken in Lingayath religion

Gulbarga: Quite opposite practice is going on nowadays, as new society is formed on the basis of universal equality. Dr. Siddalinga Swamiji of Tontadarya Mutt of Gadag argues that "To save the Lingayath religion from casteism forces, who has let to sit on casteless Peetha (Gadduge) and firmness is to be taken up".

He was addressing on Saturday here on the subject "Unity of followers of Sharana's ethics".

145. Dr. Siddalinga Swamiji of Gadag, Tontadarya Mutt. Pub: Prajavani Kannada daily, Gulbarga edition. 13th May 2007.

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Regarding women equality, social equality, religious equality, once upon a time Lingayath (Sharana) religion flowed as river Ganga. It overruled the Sanskrit language and created Vachana literature in common man's language Kannada. After that in 14th and 15th century, many Veerashaiva writers wrote in Sanskrit. Hence common men remained voile of Basava ethics. Thus the big flow of Ganga has to flow like a small stream.

Enemies of Basavanna: there are two enemies to Basavanna first is internal enemy and second one is external. Panchacharya's are the external enemies, while internal enemies are Virakta's (hermits). The Working class devotees had to quit the Lingayath religion, because they were in indulged quit Lingayath religion because both were indulged in developing their caste people, they failed to practice the caste destroying ethics of Basavanna. Seers clarify that both worked as Vedic's that's why Lingayath religion was being restricted to the limited classes instead of being a common religion.

Today so many Dalits were attracted towards Buddhism. Urilinga Peddi Samsthana belonged to Harijans. They had 30 mutts in Karnataka. They were creating awareness about religion, worship of Istalinga and they are working to propagate the religion. But we the Lingayaths are not accepting them. So they are in a very grim situation. They are surviving by (Kanti Bhiksha) asking/begging the alms. We should think seriously about this. And seers imposed forcibly that it was our bounder of responsibility to save working (Kayaka) classes from quitting out the religion. Basaveshwara has worked from language to emotion. As the successors of him we don't accept complications, select universal humanism and become liberal. Dr. P. S. Melkeri professor of psychology Dept, Gulbarga University presided over the discussion. Ramjan Darga news editor of Prajavani daily, Gulbarga was the chief guest. Discussion was organized by B R Patil, MLA of Aland.

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4. Gazetteer of Mysore State

Published in 1876 regarding the Lingayaths

(Volume I, Pp 476-477)

Insertion-1

Lingayaths: About 1160, little more years after the establishment of the Vaishnava faith in Mysore by Ramanujacharya, arose the well-known sect of Shiva worshippers called Lingayaths, chiefly composed of the Kannada and Telgu speaking races.

Basava is the founder of the sects, whose name literally means bull, was in fact regarded as the incarnation of Nandi, the bull of Shiva. His political career has been sketched in connection with the history of the Kalachuryas. He was the son of Aradhya Brahmin, a native of Bagevadi in Belgaum. According to the legends, he refused to wear the Brahminical thread because its investiture required the adoration of the sun, and related to Kalyana, the capital of Bijjala, where he became, as elsewhere related, the prime minister and where he founded the new sect.

Its distinctive mark was the wearing on the person of a Jangama Lingam or portable Linga. It is a small black stone, about the size of an acorn and is enshrined in a silver box of peculiar shape, which is worn, suspended from the neck or tied round the arm. The followers of Basava are properly called Lingavanthas, but Lingayaths has become a well own designation, though not used by themselves, the name Shivabhakta or Shivachara begin one they generally assume.

Basava rejected the authority of Vedas and the Brahmins together with the observances of pilgrimage and penance. These continue to be fundamental distinctions of the sect. They disapprove of child marriage but permit the remarriage of widows. He declared that all the holiness consisted in due regard for three things-Guru, Linga and Jangama- the guide, the image and the fellow religionist. The guide confessor can be any man of women who is the in the creed; who whispers the scared mantra in the ear of the Jangama or worshipper; and hangs the image on the neck or binds it on the arm. A guru is forbidden to eat flesh, to chew betel or touch liquor and wears a kempu kavi vastra or garment dyed with red ochre. Those who adopt the extreme views of this sect

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tare termed Veerashaivas, ultra or warrior followers of Shaiva system, a term, which indicates their polemical zeal.

The sacred books of the sect are the Basava Purana and Chennabasava Purana, written in Hale Kannada, but not of the oldest form. They consist of tales and miraculous stories regarding their gurus and saints, and of this nature is nearly all their literature, whose character is more popular then learned. The Lingayath faith soon spread through the north west of Mysore and according to the tradition, within sixty years of Basva's death or 1168-1228, it embraces from Ulavi near Goa, to Sholapur and from Balehalli or Balehonnur (Koppa taluk) to Shivaganga (Nelamangala taluk). It was the state-religion of the Wadeyars of Mysore from 1399 to 1610. The principal Lingayath Mutts in the Mysore country are the Murga Mutt at Chitradurga and the Balehonnur Math, but there are numerous others.

146.Courtesy; Kalyana Kirana, monthly magazine, May-June issue 2006, page no 19 & 20.

5. History of Lingayath Religion

A Brief Biography of Basaweshwara

Biographies of great men are often clouded with mysticism and Basaweshwara is not an exception to it. He has been described as superman and a divinity in some of the Veerashaiva Puranas. Hence, it is not surprising that common people believed Basaweshwara to be the incarnation of God and are worshiping him as such. Many great men in the history have been elevated to the divinity in recognition of the service rendered by them. Basaweshwara also took birth as human being and dedicated his life to the service of his fellowmen by enlightening them wit the true knowledge of life and salvation.

There is considerable amount of controversy regarding the birth and life of Basaweshwara. There are certain authoritative works, which provide a good deal of record about birth and life of Basaweshwara. One such reliable work is Harihara's Basawarajadeveraregale (1200 A.D.) and another is Basavapurana in Telgu by Palgurke Somnatha of Andhra region. Basaweshwara's Vacanas also provide considerable material about his life.

Four towns have played very important role in the life of Basaweshwara. They are Bagevadi, Mangalwade, Kalyan and Sangama.

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Basaweshwara was born in Bagevadi situated in Bijapur district of present Karnataka State. By the time of 12th Century A.D. it had grown into an Agrahara. Agraharas were villages donated by kings to help Brahmanas to devote themselves to learning. These were the educational centers controlled by Brahmans and they were called as Mahajans who worked under the guidance of a leader. Basaweshwara was a son of one such leader Madarasa and Madalambike was his mother. Madarasa was the chief administrative officer of that Agrahara, which shows that the position of Basaweshwara was different from that of a common man. There is a controversy as to the date of birth of Basaweshwara. However authoritative sources agree that he is born in 1131 A.D. Bagwadi was a place where the atmosphere was permeated by superstitious beliefs, empty rituals, sterile ritual ceremonies and animal sacrifices. Basaweshwara, being a member of one such traditional family where in all such rituals used to be meticulously followed, was surprised by such blind beliefs. The whole atmosphere around him and elsewhere in the society was superstitious and the dogmas held people and their minds under their firm grip.

In the society in which Basaweshwara lived there was discrimination between high born and low born. His boyhood was surrounded by an atmosphere of religious, cultural and social orthodoxy and traditionalism. The atmosphere in which Basaweshwara received his education was not free and he has to perform traditional rites and rituals. His young mind was confused due to such meaningless experiences. He being a sensitive boy gifted with sharp mind began to think at an early age regarding the ill treatment accorded to the people belonging to the lower castes. His keen observation about the surroundings in which he was living forced him to react sharply. The

147.BASAWESHWARA'S NATIVE JURISPRUDENCE (Unpublished), by DR. J.S.PATIL, B.A., Ll.M., Ph.D,. Professor & Dean, Faculty of Law, GulbargaUniversity, Gulbarga

question that was lingering in his mind was whether the religion that the people were so fervently practicing is true one at all. He was very much doubtful about the role Brahmanas were performing as the custodians of traditional learning and religion. Their precepts and practices were widely divergent. They were as selfish as any other low born and were indulging in all worldly affairs like other ordinary people.

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All these circumstances drove Basaweshwara to think that he was living in an artificial world, which had no sense of humanism. When he was eight years old arrangements were made for his *Upanayana*, a ceremony, which every Brahmana has to undergo. Basaweshwara refused to undergo such a ceremony for the reason that he was already invested with the *Linga* at the time of his birth. Basaweshwara, who had been gifted with extra-ordinary mind, could judge things in their true and right perspective even at that very young age. He did not internalize the traditional community values. On the contrary he began to question them. When he was forced to undergo the ceremony he discarded the whole ceremony and left home. Some scholars are doubtful about an eight-year-old boy having such courage, strength and ability to refuse the thread ceremony and leave home. According to some others, Basaweshwara did undergo sacred thread ceremony and left home for Kudalasangama at the age of sixteen. Singiraja states that the sacred ceremony was gone through by him he wanted to discard the same soon after. Hence it is believed that when Basaweshwara refused to wear the sacred thread, his father tried to convince him and finally Madiraja succeeded in performing the ceremony some how. When he wore the sacred thread, he began to examine self-consciously the thread ceremony and its mechanical ritualism. The whole *Upanayana* ceremony and the subsequent observances did not edify him as such persons who did not have any insight into them administered them in a rigid, mechanical and formal procedure. On the contrary, it created a sense of abhorrence for the religious faith of which it was a symbol. It also aroused in him the latent spirit of revolt against Brahmanical dogmas and ritualism. Therefore it can be said that Basaweshwara has undergone thread ceremony at the age of eight and discarded the same at the age of sixteen. Thereafter, he left to Kudalasangama renouncing his relationship with Brahminism.

Kudalasangama is a place where Basaweshwara laid the foundations of his movement against the evils pervading the traditional society. Sangama was an ideal place where he could pursue his cherished objective. In that free atmosphere he could experience and enjoy the presence of the God in the form of Sangameshwara who was a perennial fountain of inspiration for him. He was accessible to all the devotees irrespective of their caste and creed. In such an atmosphere he

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devoted his entire service to Lord Sangameshwara and was able to find peace for his troubled mind. It provided an environment of enlightenment for his soul and his personality blossomed fully.

It is said that the confluence of rivers Krishna and Malaprabha, the very source of vitality; the surrounding nature, the source of beauty; the great saints at Sangama, the very reincarnation of truth; and Sangameshwara, the vital breath of devotion must have transformed the whole being of Basaweshwara.

At Kudalasangama, Basaweshwara came in contact with Ishanya Guru and he showered on Basaweshwara the bounty of love and affection of a great teacher. The teacher initiated his worthy disciple into the sacred pursuits. Under him, Basaweshwara acquired knowledge of Vedas, Agamas and Puranas. Lore of the Shaiva saints like Jedara Dasimayya Saukra Dasimayya and Sakalesha Madaras appealed to his mind very much. All his learning and experience at Kudalasangama made him to believe that God is one and world is one and all the people in that world are equal without any distinction of caste, creed, sex, birth or status in the society. His experience and enlightenment at the feet of Lord Sangameshwara were unique.

As he was growing into a young man, he witnessed the same orthodox and rigid society at Kudalasangama similar to that of Bagewadi. This was a thing, which he could not put up with, and his desire to bring about drastic reform was growing stronger and stronger in him as days passed by. He prepared himself at Kudalasangama with his ideological and institutional weapons for his coming struggle for the establishment of a *Jangama* society. Harihara in his work *Basawarajadevara Ragale* points out that when Basaweshwara was asleep there was a divine call for him to leave Kudalasangama for Mangalwada to put into practice his ideas. There is also a view that his great *Guru* persuaded him to go to Mangalwada to undertake his life's mission. The great *Gurus* at Kudalasangama were observing Basaweshwara right from his boyhood. Being convinced of the divine power they must have felt that it was time that Basaweshwara should launch himself into the larger world with his message of salvation to mankind. They were convinced that he had a definite mission to fulfill.

Basaweshwara considered the service to humanity as the service to

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God, Lord Kudalasangama. Having such an idea in mind Basaweshwara might have decided to leave Kudalasangama for Mangalwada. However there are differences of opinion as to what place Basaweshwara left Kudalasangama for. According to Harihara's *Basavarajadevara Ragale*, he first went to Mangalwada. On the other hand, Palgurike Somanatha in his *Basava Puranam II* points out that Basaveshwara went to Kalyana from Kudalasangama. The fact that Basaweshwara entered the service of Bijjala who was a feudatory ruler of Mangalwada indicates that he went to Mangalwada first. He joined Bijjala's office as an accountant and rose to the position of the Chief of Treasury in a short period by his efficiency, sharp mind and hard work. Basaweshwara's stay at Mangalwada was very short. But during his stay he took up his work with utmost sincerity. He never slackened his efforts in his religious practices in the midst of secular obligations, which he was to perform at Mangalwada since his arrival at that place.

Basaweshwara's name and fame spread far and wide and people from different parts started coming to Mangalwada. All visitors were welcomed with love and affection at his home known as *Mahamane.* People who visited Basaweshwara were greatly influenced by his sense of devotion and honesty. This is how he became man of the masses.

In the course of time many political changes had occurred and Bijjala who was usurping into the seat of power of Chalukyas transferred his capital from Mangalwada to Kalyan. Consequent upon this Basaweshwara also moved into Kalyan. His stay at Kalyan was the most significant event of that period. It provided him with opportunities for his social, religious, cultural and literary movement. Within a short period of time, Kalyan became the great center of such a movement. The whole town was flooded with his staunch followers. The surging congregation of the *Jangama* devotees, preaching and kindling divine light, always surrounded him. His mystic teachings and performance radiated luster all around and were carried to spiritual seekers in different parts of the country. All of them were thronging into Kalyan for enlightenment and to get their doubts and difficulties solved.

The enlightened personalities who paid their visit to Kalyan and benefited by the communion were Allmaprabhu, Sidharama, Madivala Machayya, Urilinga Deva, Kumbara Gundappa, Madara Channayya, Muligeya Marayya, etc. many distinguished women such as

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Akkamahadevi and Muktayyakka have been the beneficiaries of his companionship. People who came to Kalyan from different parts of the country were belonging to different castes, occupations and sections of the society. All were provided with equal social status and equal opportunity for the development of their socio-religious personality. Basaweshwara opened up a new outlook on the social order and breathed a new spirit in the religion. The vision which he had in the prime of his life at Kudalasangama had been virtually realised within a span of about three decades at Kalyan. He had given a staggering blow to the old order, conservatism and dogmas. He had initiated his fellowmen into a new religious faith and social order.

Kalyana was like a heaven on earth. Basaweshwara had established the *Sunnya Peetha* of his *Mahamane*, in the *Anubhava Mantapa* as a symbol of the new religion that was being advocated by the *Sharanas* in 1154 A.D. Allamaprabhu, a supreme *Shivayogi*, ascended the Peetha in 1162 A.D., thus establishing a new religion.

The social revolution was the hallmark of this great movement. The cardinal principles for which Basaweshwara stood were of equality, liberty and fraternity. His lifelong struggle was to eradicate the deep-rooted *Varnashrama* system. Basaweshwara being the *Mahapradhana* would take his meals with Sivanagamayya who formerly was an untouchable. Such incidents created sensation in the traditional society.

When the movement gathered momentum, Bijjala's religious advisors complained against Basaweshwara's movement, creating a gulf between him and Bijjala. An inter caste marriage between a Brahmin girl and an untouchable conducted by Basaweshwara further intensified the rift between Bijjala and Basaweshwara. Bijjala became intolerant of these activities and severely punished the parents of the children for conducting the marriage against religious injunctions. This incident sent shock waves into the entire community of Sharanas. Some of the Sharanas urged for revenge. But Basaweshwara was not in favour of such a move as he was not in favour of violence and bloodshed. As he lost control over the movement he decided to dissociate himself from the same. He left Kalyan with a group of his intimate followers to Kudalasangama for his eternal abode. At the fag end of his life, he had the sense of fulfillment, though it is mixed with the deep sense of distress for the ruler's ruthless action against his social revolution.

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Life and times of Basavanna

The illuminating chapters in the history of man's progress and development are really those that tell of the mighty souls who lead the race from darkness to light, from misery to happiness, from ugliness to beauty, and above all, from death to deathlessness. Basavanna of Kalyana is one such mighty soul.

Basavanna was the only son of Madarasa and Madalambika a distinguished and devout Shaiva couple of Bagewadi, a small town near modern (Bijapur) Bagalkot in (Mysore) Karnataka State (south India). He was born during the beginning of the twelfth century A. D. and lived, perhaps till the end of that century.

His parents were ardent followers of Vedic religion. They had their own way of worship, beliefs and traditions. But

148.Page no 15-19 of "Vachana's of Basavanna", as Introduction, By Sri Taralabalu Jagadguru Sri Shivakumar Shivacharya. Pub; Annana Balaga Sirigere

Basavanna even while he was a young boy, somehow, developed as aversion for the Brahminical rites which involved the sacrifice of animals. Divisions of the society into several classes on the basis of the birth of an individual did not convince him. He was very unhappy to see that the only so called superior class had the right to perform certain rites and not others. So, he left his parents and his relations out of sheer disguest even while he was in his teens. He went to a Shaiva teacher at Kudala Sangama a sacred place where two big rivers Krishna and Malaprabha meet each other. The philosophy of the Shaiva saint must have been of a progressive nature so as to catch the imagination of this blooming genius.

By the time he mastered the Shaiva Philosophy and religion, Basavanna was invited to serve in the Court of king Bijjala. He accepted the invitation since his inner voice also prompted him to do so. Bijjala, a Kalachuri Prince was ruling the Thrdewadi province from Mangalawada at that time. Baladeva dannayaka one of the ministers of Bijjala, got his daughter Gangambika wedded to him. Gangambika proved a worthy wife to Basavanna in all respects.

By his selfless service, honesty and integrity, Basavanna won the admiration of the King Bijjala. In due course he became the custodian of

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the King's treasury. A few years later, Bijjala began to rule from Kalyana after overthrowing the Chaluklya emperor. Basavanna also went over to Kalyana and continued as a minister under Bijjala, Probably he started to propagate the Veerashaiva religion from Kalyan.

Kalyana is a famous historical city which is situated in modern Bidar District of Mysore (Karnataka) State. It was this city that gave birth to a great Lingayath movement under the dynamic leadership of Basavanna. A great social and religious reformer that he was, Basavanna set to work with unflinching zeal to eradicating the social and religion inequity in Hindu society at that time. He preached that all men are brothers, bad conduct is low caste, food conducts is high caste and religion is the birthright of every body. These doctrines of liberty, equality and brotherhood were quite new to common man of the land. It was a great boon to them, particularly women who were thrown to the dark corner. This is the first prophet perhaps, to extol the dignity of manual labour, since advocated the equality of all professions. These factors, beside his official position, charity, piety and learning made his new creed very popular.

The movement became well-known throughout the length and breadth pf Karnataka and even beyond. There was ready and hearty response from even the nook and corner of the country. Spiritual aspirants from different parts of the country who came under the influence of his profound teachings, clustered around him.

Allama Prabhu, Channabasavanna, Akka Mahadevi, Akkanagamma, Moligeya Maraih and a host of others, both men and women coming from various strata of the society worked with him. It is this great galaxy that made the city of Kalyana memorable in the history of Karnataka and created the ever Anubhava Mantapa a congregation of the great saints and mystics. Shunya Shimhasana, the sacred seat of the Holy was established in the Mantapa.

This Anubhava Mantapa, the temple of religious experience was not built of stones bricks and mortar. The Shunya Simhasana which Allama is said to have adored is not made of precious metals, pearls or stones. It was a conflagration of the highest spiritual wisdom and a centre of divine awareness which could serve as spiritual illumination for all time to come.

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Hundreds of saints, both men and women contributed their intuitive experience to the Anubhava Mantapa the fountain of divine experience. They gave utterance to their spiritual experiences which were so original and unique that they were reduced to writing in simple and chaste Kannada. These writings in the style of poetic prose come to be called as Vachana. Till then, no prophet tried to teach ion Kannada language of the people of Karnataka. Vachana's, as they were in simple and guanine Kannada made an unprecedented influence of Kannadigas. They enraptured the hearts of thousands of Kannadigas and the movement became very popular and powerful in a very short time. Nobody, not even Bijjala, the monarch at that time could control this powerful movement.

Bijjala who had overthrown the Chalukyan ruler and usurped his throne feared that he may suffer the same fate at the hands of Basavanna and his followers. This fear was baseless. But some people who were highly orthodox and others who were aspiring for power fanned the fire of misunderstanding Basavanna and the king. One significant event which was ahead of the time, provided them an opportunity. The celebration of the marriage of the son of an 'untouchable' named Haralayya with the daughter of Madhuvayya s Brahmin! This shook the very foundation of the caste system and was too much to the orthodoxy to tolerate. They pleaded before the King that the marriage, unholy and irreligious, was performed at the instance of Basavanna, and goaded him to punish the so called heretics. Of course, both Haralayya and Madhuvayya were Lingavantha's. The marriage was just in accordance with the new faith preached by Basavanna who was very highly pleased at it.

Bijjala who was perhaps jealous of the popularity of Basavanna wanted to win the favour of the Orthodoxy and some disgruntled officers who had joined them. He ordered the eyes of the contracting parties to be put out. Basavanna's interference was of no avail. It is said that the 'criminals were finally executed.

Basavanna's gentle heart was filled with grief and remorse. He quietly left Kalyana at once with his followers. Kudala Sangama, wherefrom Basavanna emerged as a great teacher, greeted him with open arms. Probably, one or two years after his return to Kudala Sangama he sought union with the Supreme.

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Basavanna has written hundreds of Vachanas which may be considered as world's classics. They are of a very high literary and philosophical value. These Vachana's have not only enriched Kannada literature, but they have also lent strength and substance to it

There are about one hundred works on the life, teachings and miracles of Basavanna in Kannada, Telgu, Tamil, Sanskrit and Marathi since he is admired and adored to a very great extent, in these parts of our country. Unfortunately, none of these works give full and correct picture of Basavanna. But all of them agree that he was a great saint and teacher. Prabhudeva, a lofty spiritual personality, impressive and full of vigor was all admiration for him. Siddharama, Chennabasavanna, Akkamahadevi, Nilambike, Gangambike, Machayya the washerman, Marayya a supplier of fire wood. Hampanna the barber, Kakkayya the tanner, Haralayya the cobbler. Bommayya the Latinist and a host of others coming from several parts of the country flocked to Kalyana, and enrolled themselves as adherents of the new faith. Basavanna was endowed with the miraculous capacity to convert even the ill-fated people like thieves, debauches, murders into ideal devotees. Everybody who came in contact with him got inspiration and enlightenment.

Basavanna is undoubtedly the most fortunate of all the prophets of the world. Hundred saints joined, practiced and preached this new religion even while he was alive. Almost all of them wrote Vachana's chaste literary Kannada. But the wonder of wonders is none of them was his disciple. He himself has said "No one is smaller then myself". In fact, many of the Sharanas corrected Basavanna whenever they found shortcomings in him. Marayya the wood supplier may be quotes as instances. In the Anubhava Mantapa, one was corrected and moulded by the other. In the individual families too husband used to guide his wife, wife moulded the character of the husband. It was really a comprehensive popular movement. Basavanna was the great luminary in the centre, absorbing the light and energy from others and ejecting the same in some other form in return,

The original collection of the Vachana's is a mirror in which the brilliant colorful and out standing personality of Basavanna is very clearly reflected.

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6. 'Kittel' Kannada Dictionary Meanings

1. Ingleshwara=Name of the birth place of Basava the founder of Lingayathism.
2. Lingavantha= A male individual of the sect who exclusively worship Shiva, his phallus, and Basava and carry the representation of the pullas suspended around the neck. The members of the Lingavantha (or Veerashaiva) sect are 1, Aradhya Brahmins(about one amongst a thousand); 2,Kshatriya (who at present appear to be very rare); 3,Vaisyas or Setti'es (Viz, Banajigas, Balegaras, Nekaraas, Kanchgaras, Ganigas, and Kumbars); 4,Sudras, (Viz Goudas, Okkaligas, Kurubas, Badigas, Akkasales, Sunnagaras, Agasas and Kshurikas); 5,Jangamas or Ayyas (who were clearly acknowledged as members of the sect at the time of its founder Basaveshwara, under the last but one of the Chalukya kings of Kalyana, but are now disowned as such, with the exception of the Chalvadis, who put ashes to their forehead, worship Linga (though not tying it to their neck), and have to walk before the corpse of a Lingavantha that is carried to grave or before an Idol (Shiva or Basava)when carried about. Members of 1-5 eat in company(excepting the Kshurikas who have to sit separately), but do not intermarry, the Pujaris of the Lingavantha's are either poor Shetti's or Sudras, of the their sects; if there is a Linga besides a Basava (bullock) in the temple, Shaiva Brahmana of any sect will officiate as Pujari in Lingavantha temples. Jangamas do not make Namaskara to the Basava in a temple, but do so to the Linga there, and when poor, may so far act also as Pujaris (Lingavntanudasi)
3. Basava= 1) the bull on which Shiva rides; 2) its incarnation of earth; Basava the founder of the Lingayath sect, 3) a bull at liberty dedicated to some.

149. 1.2.3. Rev. F. Kittel Kannada English dictionary, Pub: Mangalore Mission Book and Tract Depository 1894. Asian Educational Services, 31 Hauzkhas village, New Delhi 110016. Seventh AES reprint: New Delhi, 1994.
English meaning to Kannada word at
Page no 181-B
Page no1361-A
Page no 1092-A.

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7. "Lingayath religion as independent religion"

It seems "Purohitism" is found to be as side nail in every religion. Purohitism, (Purohitshahi) does take religion to peak; it may misguide or pull down. Lingayathism was presented very logically after Buddhism, which was presented scientifically. The name Lingayath is very suitable, because Istalinga is to come in hand (Karasthala) and fix up (Aayata) on body. Moreover, after Basavanna only, it seems to be Shaivist by outer side, but it was formed by cutting nose of the Agama's and excluding the Shaiva. It may be called as Veerashaiva as identified differently from origin of Vedic Shaivism. It is perfectly suitable to call after Basava Dharma (religion).

"Both Veerashaiva and Lingayath are same". This statement of researcher Dr. M Chidanandamurthy is acceptable as it is the means of unifying the 1/3 population of Karnataka. But by the nexus with fundamentalist he argues that both the Lingayath and Veerashiava are part of Hinduism, which is never acceptable. Because Hinduism has complexities, inequality and untouchability, so it can not be compared to Lingayathism. In Basava (Lingayat) religion, there are not at all opposite thoughts, complexities, and misunderstandings in practice. Lingayath religion proponed by Basava was sculptured proponed with discussion at Anubhava Mantapa. It came out as clear as crystal.

Vachana religion is in simple Kannada language. It does not require any more simplification. If Kannada language got fertility then, it is because of Vachana Sahitya (literature) and splendid culture of Karnataka. And it is because of the attitude of Sharanas. Basava denied body food.

He advised to salute any person seen and the person is called devotee (Bhakta). Lingayath religion is the only religion to preach soft sayings worship/chants.

Culture of mainstream which swallowed tribal culture and is the cause for the misdefinition of Basava religion. Basava Dharma

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is made to disappear by foot worship (Pada Puje), and the living Seers's is carried on shoulders of men as special honour, and treated as superior to the rest (Addapallakki).

When bhakta comes to bhakta's house,
He must behave as servant would:
If he should ask to wash his feet,
As though he were the lord,
His past devotion is waste!
A hundred thousand leagues, to see
A bhakta, is meritorious deed;
And if together, they perform
The lowliest service, then indeed
Our Koodalasangama
Shall take them to his heart![153]

152. *Special supplement "Light of Kalyana" (Kalyana Belagu) of Prajavani daily, Basava Jayanti issue dated 20th, April 2007.written by Dr. Mudnakudu Chennaswami*

153. *"Bhakta bhaktana manege bandade, bhratyacharava madabeke. Kartnagi kalu tolesikondade, Hinde madida Bhaktige hani. Lakka gavuda dariaya hogi, Bhaktanu Bhaktana kambudu sadachara. Alli koodi Dashohava madidade, Koodikombanu namma Koodalasangayya!* "SVS1/246. V of B 246

It is regrettable the devotees of Basava are adjusted themselves to Vedic practice by knowingly.

During my stay at Gadag I met so many surrounding Mutts. Famous Seer of Gadag Tontadarya Mutt Dr. Siddha Linga Swamiji considered my thoughts and heard about Vachana nirvachana he used to discuss about some of my views with professor M. M. Kalaburgi. Swamiji was the notion that about Lingayath religion is independent; it was unfortunate as Seer's faced opposition of Sangh Parivar (RSS) and his devotees belonging to his caste. At that time both of us tried to convince in a programme as Lingayath religion is an independent religion and it is absolutely different from Hindu religion. We used the following Vachana as example to clarify it and are enough to prove. .

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Let not pass from birth to birth,
Let me not utter 'I am He',
But only 'thy servant I'.
Show me the worth of prasada
of linga's and Jangama
and let me live,
I pray thee, Kudalasangama Lord! V of B 833

Basavanna has given so many Vachanas which, oppose the Vedas, Brahmanism and even rule out them clearly. Example;

I'll grid myself with arms
To fight the Vedas;
I will put fetters on
The Shastras;
I will raise weals on Logic's back;
Look you, I will chop off
The Agama's nose!
O Kudalasangama Lord,
O Thou most bountiful, I am
Madara Chennayya's servant-man! V of B 716

It is amazing that the ethical vision of Lingayath religion is hidden in Vachana literature in very short form. These are never before creatures. Here in Basavanna defines soul (Atma) and rebirth. In Lingayath religion there are no worldly life circles (Bhava Vali, Bhava chakra). It means one cannot take rebirth and also death. Because Linga Jangama achieve oneness with God. It means he will dissolve in Pancha Bhuta (five elements, earth, water, fire, air, ether)

154. *Janma janmakke hogaliyade, 'soham' endenisde 'dashoham' endenisayya, Linga jangama prasadada nilava tori badukisayya, Koodalasangama nimma dharma. SVS1/834*

155. *"vedakke vareya kattuve Shastrakke nigalavanikkuve", Tarkada benna barannettuve, Agamada muga kouuve, nodayya. Mahadani Koodalasangamadeva, Madar Chennayyana maneya maga nanayya! SVS1/71*

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This equals Nirvana concept of Buddhism. 'Souham" is as "Aham Brahamasmi" means the concept of "I am the God". to Basavanna Kudalasangama was the only God. To virtual wife there is only husband. He never became the dog child that bond to other gods. Basavanna did not accept practices of assumption and declares "Dasoham". He says him selves as slave. He declares this religion (Lingayathism) is for the sake of society, for the sake of people.

Let not, O Lord, my body, mind and wealth
Slacken in service of thy Saranas!
Make thou my body thrill
To service; make mind
Be charmed by it;
And, for it, make my wealth to waste.
make me to sing and dance, in gaze and love,
Yearn and rejoice, and be at peace
Without thy Sarana's grace,
O Kudala Sangama Lord! Vof B 458

The religion created so many serving classes and which was the pride attitude of "I am the god". They further split into many pieces, became house of inequality. The religion of the attitude, "I am the servant" taught kindliness as well as equality. Jesus Christ also clarified that he came to wash Sins of the people. Service is the theme of Christianity. Basavanna gave Kayaka, Dashoha the basic chants (Mantras) of religion by adopting servicing attitude as "no one is smaller to me". Lifetime struggle of Basavanna was to fight against the evils of Purohitism. So existence of religion called as Basava Dharma (Basava religion) is completely different from Hinduism. Here we should note one point that the word Hindu was not in existence during 12th century or at the time of Vachana revolution. So no any Vachanakaras (Vachana writers) used it. That had been created after the visit of Persians to India.

Here are many Vachanas available to prove Lingayathism as independent religion.

What signifies what caste they be?

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He who has Siva Linga is well born.
Will you, once classes have been mixed,
Look for their class in Sharnas?
The class that's born of Siva-that is faith;
Give up our bygone caste:
For Uma is our mother, Rudra your sire,
Isavara is your only clan.
Since this is so, whatever they give
At theirs, I take, give them by child,
For I believe in your Sharanas,
O Kudala sangama Lord! V of B 716

156. *Ayya, nimma sharanara dashohakke, Tanumana dhana valasadante madayya, Tanu dashohakke ubbuvante madayy, Mana dashohakke liyuvante madu, Dhana dashojhakke savedu nimma sharanara prasadadalli, Nirantara aadi, hadi, nodi, koodi, Bhavisi, sukhisi, Parinamisuvante madu Kudalasangamadeva. SVS1/459*

This Vachana contains three points one is the person who is right means who has Shivalinga and in process of becoming Sharana one can loose his caste, lastly the persons born in Shiva religion are free from rebirth. So basic carnation of Lingayath religion is that of total denial of base of Verna system and become Sharana by avoiding the casteism. So Basavanna defines his religion by solely avoiding rituals of Vedic religion. By achieving impossibility of Vedic religion he introduced the Shivadharma, for example we can refer this Vachana.

The Veda quaked, the Sastra stepped aside;
Logic, unable to infer, fell dumb;
The agamas, swerving, stood apart-
Because our Lord Kudala Sang
Ate at Cennayya's house! Vof B749

Eating of Lord Kudala Sangayya at house of Madara (least person) Chennayya is non-Vedic ritual. If ate, then Veda will quak (shake) Shastra pulls down, Vachana is very clear so on.

Can there be filth where Linga is?

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Can there be caste where Jangama is?

Can there be offal where Prasad is?

The impurity of speaking unholy words

Is sin!

The Formless, the united with reality,

The triple consummation, O Lord

Kudala Sangama,

Is only for thy Saranas! Vof B 769

The Above mentioned Vachana gives clear picture of (Jati) caste, (Kula) race, (Madi) purity, (Mailige) filth. There is not at all place for superior and inferior feelings in Basava philosophy. He feels hurt; it burns him by bifurcating Jangama as upper, middle and low.

Basavanna is the pride of Karnataka He proved and practiced humanity as one. Karnataka state can be a model by practicing Basavanna's ethics. Minds boiling at communalism, casteism and impatience can be released by Basava (Lingayath) religion.

Seer frowns on attempts to establish a new religion

'Veerashaiva exist before Basaveshwara'

157. *Aava kulavadadenu? Shivalingaviddavane kulajanu, Kulavanarasuvare saranaralli, jati sankaranada balika? Shivadharmakulejatha punarjanma vivarjitaha, Uma mata pita rudra Iswaryam kulamevach endudagi, Vakkuda kombenavaralli, kusa koduve. Koodalasangamadeva, nambuve nimma Sharanaranau, SVS1/718*

158. *Veda nadanada nadugittu, shasatra vagali kelakke saridittayya! Tarka tarkisalariayade muuguvattidditayya! Agama hora tolagi agalidditayya! Namma KudalaSangayyanu Madara Chennayyyana maneyalunda karana. SVS1/750*

159. *Holeunte lingaviddadeyalli? Kulavunte jangamaviddadeyalli? Enjalunte prasadaviddadeyalli? Apavitra nudiya nudiva sutakave pataka. Niskalanka nijaikya trividhanirnaya, Kudalasangamadeva, nimma Sharanarigalladilla. SVS1/770*

160. *The Hindu daily, Hyderabad. Friday, October 6, 2006. Karnataka edition.*

Shimoga: Jagadguru Prasanna Renuka Veer Someshwara Shivacharya of Rambhapuri Math Balehonnur in Chikmaglur district has taken exeption to attempts by some religious leaders to establish a new religion in the

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name of the 12th century social reformer Basaveshwara.

In an interview to the Hindu here, the Swamiji who conducted his 15th " Dasara Durbar" and "Jana Jagruti Dharma Sammelana" here for 10 days from September 23, said, " it is meaningless to establish a religion in the name of any individual."

He asserted that Veerashaivism was not founded by Basaveshwara as was being claimed by some people and that it existed even before he was born.

On the controversy over the one-upmanship between the ancient Pancha Peetha's of Veerashaiva religion and the post-Basaveshwara Veerashaiva math, the Swamiji said that Basaveshwara could not be accepted as a religious leader by any reckoning.

"At the most, he (Basaveshwara's) can be accepted as a social reformer and an ideal 'Grahasta' (married person) who has unfortunately become a saleable commodity for those who head the religious institutions dedicated to his (Basaveshwara's) ideology."

The Swamiji said there was a basic difference between the term's "Veerashaiva" and "Lingayatha" and as such they were not one. "While the former is comprehensive and ideologically oriented as far as its religious base is concerned, the later is only the process of wearing the "Linga" he added.

Criticized

The Swamiji came down on a prominent head of a Veerashaiva religious institution for propagating that eating of meat was not a taboo for Veerashaivas.

The Swamiji said he took the initiative to invite heads of Veerashaiva math's, dedicated to the teachings and ideology of Basaveshwara, to share the platform with the Pancha Acharyas at a function at Balehonnur on march 16, 2003 in a bid to resolve the basic differences between them. " It evoke a good response as heads of Lingayath Mutts, including those in Suttur, Chitradurga and Hubli, who attended it respond positively" he said.

He said a similar attempt to bring the Pancha Acharyas and heads of the mutts was made under the aegis of the Akhila Bharata Veerashaiva Mahasabha at Koodala Sangama in June 2003. "But it failed to bring

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about the desired results," he noted.

The Swamiji expressed displeasure over the neglect of Koodala Sangama (Where the rivers Krishna and Malaprabha meet in Bagalkot district where Basaveshwara's life is believed to have come to an end). "Why are the activities there not being conducted in consonance with the ideals of Basaveshwara?"

Distortions

He also alleged that there were distortions in the attempts to promote Basaveshwara's ideals and claimed that the credit of the massage "Kayakve Kailsha" (work is worship) was wrongly attributed to Basaveshwara; it was coined by some other religious leader of the community. "It was sought to be done only to vitiate the cordiality in the community", he noted.The Swamiji regretted that attempts were not being made to safeguard the interest of Veerashaiva. On the Datta Peetha controversy, the Swamiji said it could be resolved if leaders displayed political acumen. "Unfortunately those who claim to be secular are not taking a firm stand on the issue' he said

8. Enthovan's detailed information

Reginald Edward Enthovan, an officer of census Department of Bombay, belonging to British Government has written an essay on the rituals and organization of the Lingayaths, it has been translated in to Kannada by B. Narayana Rau of Bellary and published in the year 1910 title is "Lingayath Dharmavu" (Lingayath religion). Original book is available at British Library London.

The book gives very clear cut information; Enthovan has written the book on the base of historical literature and point collected by meeting the general public. The book contains the following Chapters,

Population of Lingayaths, as per 1901census.

The name " Lingayaths "

Lingayath sect is different from the Hindu sect.

Origin of Lingayath religion, details of caste discrimination.

Astavarana

Similarities of Lingayath religion and Catholic ethics.

Bases of origin of Lingayath religion, the documentary evidences of stone scripture.

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False notion of literate Lingayath followers claims, as they are Brahmins. 9, 10&11 details not available.

Claim of third grade Lingayaths as they are not Lingayaths is not firm.

Details not available

Belief and behaviors of Lingayaths.

Births

Engagements

Marriage

Deaths

Shradha sutaka (a funeral ceremony observed at various fixed periods, consisting of Pindas (balls of meal) with water and fire to the gods and manes, and of gift and food to relatives and assist Brahmana, menses, impurity) and rebirth are not applicable to Lingayathism

Muttu mudichettu (Impediment, hindrance, stoppage of women rega)

System of became Lingayath for non-Lingayaths.

Bibliography

Names of castes

Enthovan clarifies in his book "Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics" 1st Eden. 1915 & 1939 editions VIII page no 69-75. On studying some main Ethics and practices, it

161. *M. Chidanada Murty "Basavanna: Karnataka: Bharata"Page 668-9, Annexure XVIII is difficult to consider Lingayath's as Hindus. He also clarifies that Lingayath's claim to belong to the Hindu is false. They have unique feature.*

9. Definition of Dharma (Religion): Swami Vivekananda.

1. In religion, there is no caste. A man from the highest caste and a man from the lowest may became monk in India and the castes became equal. The caste system is opposed to the religion of the Vedanta.

Caste is very good thing. Caste is the plan we want to allow... there is no country in the world without caste. In India from caste, we reach to the point where thee is no caste. Caste is based thought on that principle. The plan in India is to make everybody Brahmana, the Brahmana being the ideal of humanity. By the Brahmana ideal, what do I

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mean? I mean the ideal Brahmananess in which worldliness is altogether absent and true wisdom is abundantly present. That is ideal of the Hindu race.

We believe in Indian caste as one of the great social institutions that the Lord gave to man... we also believe that though unavoidable defects ... in many ways the legitimate fructification of this most glorious Indian institution it has already worked wonders for the land of Bharath and is destined to lead Indian humanity to its goal.

Caste should not go, but should only be readjusted occasionally... caste is good. That is the only natural way in solving life. Men must from themselves into groups and you cannot get rid of that. Wherever you go there will be caste. But that doesn't mean that there should be these privileges. And that is what we want. No privileges for anyone-equal chances for all. Let every one be taught that the Divine is within and every one will work out his salvation.

Our solution of the caste question is not degrading those who are already high up, is not running amuck through food and drink. Is not pampering out of our own limits in order to have, ore enjoyment, but it comes by everyone of us fulfilling the dictates of our Vedantic religion, by our attaining spirituality and by our becoming the ideal Brahmana. There fore it is no use fighting among the castes. The solution is not by bringing down the higher, but by raising the lower up to the level of the higher... Swami Vivekananda, On India and Her Problems. Chapter VI

2. There are Varnas, but none of the Varnas superior to the others. Verna does not connote superiority, it connotes different functions and different duties. Caste distinctions as far as they imply superiority of one over another have to be abolished altogether. That is merely a phase or a grade of untouchability. But in so far as caste in the sense of Verna fulfills nature's law of conservation of human energy and true economies it is good to recognize and obey the law. Mahatma Gandhi

162. Definition of Dharma (Religion).By Swami Vivekananda, Published in the book, Hindu Dharmada Parichaya, By Erdukula. K. Shankar Narayana Bhatt. Page 241&242

163. An article by Mahatma Gandhi published in the periodical "Harijan" dated Feb. 2, 1934. Collected/Published in the book, "Hindu Dharmada Parichaya". By Erdukula. K. Shankar Narayana Bhatt. Page 435

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"Hinduism is not an exclusive religion. In there is room for the worship of all the prophets of the world. It is not a missionary religion in the ordinary sense of term. It has

no doubt absorbed many tribes in its fold, but this absorption has been of an evolutionary, imperceptible character. Hinduism tells every one to worship God according to his own faith or dharma and so lives at peace with all the religion.

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Annexure -C

INTERVIEWS

1) **Sri Bhimanna Khandre, *President,*** Akhila Bharat Veerashaiva Maha Sabha, Bangalore. Camp Bhalki, District Bidar.

2) **Sri Madh Rambhapuri Jagadguru Prasanna Renuka Veer Someshwar Raja Deshikendra Shivacharya Bhagavatpadaru.** Srimad Rambhpuri Veera Shimhasana Mahasamsthana Peetha, Bale Honnur. 577112 Chikmagaluru Dist, Karnataka.

3) **Pujya, Sri Shivamurthi Murugharajendra Sharanaru, *President*** Basava Kendra, Brahanmatha, Chitradurga.

4) **Dr. J. S. Patil, *Professor and Dean,*** Department of Law,

   Gulbarga University, Gulbarga. Present ***Vice Chanellor***, Karnataka State Law University, Hubli.

   Pujya, Sri Mata Mahadevi (Mataji), *President*, Basava Dharm Peetha Koodalsangama

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1. Interview with Sri Bhimanna Khandre, President, Akhila Bharat Veerashaiva Maha Sabha, Bangalore. Camp Bhalki, District Bidar, on 18th Feb 2006

1) Is Lingayathism part of Hinduism?

Ans: Yes

2) If yes how?

Ans: Hinduism is broad culture, that's why Lingayathism is naturally part of it.

3) If no how?

Ans: Not applicable

4) Are Veerashaiva and Lingayaths different?

Ans: No

5) If yes how?

Ans: The concept is one and only one whatever you may call them.

6) If no how?

Ans: Not applicable.

7) Has Lingayathism its own ethics?

Ans: No

8) Basaveshwara belongs to which of the following? 1) Prophet 2) Guru 3) Preacher

Ans: All the three.

9) What is concept of Istalinga?

Ans: Istalinga is mobile representation of GOD. It is made to oppose Idol worship. Eradicate the mediatorship between the GOD and man.

10) Which is supreme Soul?

Ans: No comments.

11) What is concept of God in Lingayathism?

Ans: God is formless. But to worship the symbolic representation is called Istalinga.

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12) Lingayaths are permitted to worship only 1) Guru 2) Linga 3) Jangama, is it right or wrong?

Ans: Right

13) If it is right, how?

Ans: these three cover much more as we need to worship.

14) If it is wrong, how?

Ans: Not applicable.

15) Should Down trodden, economically backward class people be given equal right in Religion?

Ans: Nowadays the given opportunity is misused by the masses belonging to the downtrodden, concept of ancient preachers is correct. They also should get Religious (Shamskaras) Sanctifications, but now it does not have the meaning.

16) If yes why?

Not applicable

17) If no why?

Ans: Not applicable

18) Universal fraternity can be achieved by which one of the following 1) Hinduism, 2) Veerashaiva. 3) Lingayath? And How

Ans: Hinduism practices the Universal fraternity. Among the different cults, and different caste, it is union of so many cultures. And I'll repeat once again Veerashaiva &Lingayath both are same and part of Hinduism. That's why your question will not stand to answer.

19) Do you not think if women are not given equal chance in every field of life, then half of the population will be in dark?

Ans: absolutely correct.

20) If yes, what are the remedies with Hinduism Veerashaivism to solve it?

Ans: In Veerashaivism/Lingayathism we have many reference regarding this. In 12th century Guru Basavanna has practiced it.

21) Has Lingayathism mention in its religious literature to

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eliminate the problem?

Ans: Yes.

22) What is the Ethics of Hinduism?

Ans: We should not bother about it, because we following Veerashaiva/Lingayath. By this we are Hindus that's all. Hindu is a life style, it is name of people who reside in this part of land..

23) Hindu, Veerashaiva & Lingayatha, among these which one can cover all the sections of society?

Ans: practically you are making three part of only one concept. Your question is wrong..

24) How?

Ans: No doubt Hinduism is already practicing it.

25) Who is the inventor of Istalinga?

Ans: No comments.

26) Lingayathism denies Veda is it correct?

Ans: Again, you are going to bifurcate the society. I will not answer this question, because it is unanswerable question..

27) If it is correct, how?

Ans: Not applicable.

28) If it is wrong, how?

Ans: Not applicable

29) What is the remedy for present day disintegration of Hinduism?

Ans: only one thing, we should have strong unity.

30) What is your notion about forcible conversion into Islam by religious names Jihad & terror?

Ans: It is wrong. It is crime. The sad thing is that we are not going to stop this major crime. I personally oppose it.

31) What are your points of view on spreading Christianity by providing service, education?

Ans: this and Islamic conversion are same but way is different. I oppose this also.

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32) Faith in religion is waste of time and labor. It is the thought of nowadays trend. Is it correct?

Ans: absolutely wrong.

33) If correct how?

Ans: Not applicable

34) If wrong how?

Ans: Our culture is very precious, Western people are attracted by our great heritage, but our people neglecting it, this is wrong, and our mass is fallowing western, waste and worthless culture. It should stop here only.

35) Lingayatha is a stable, complete & independent religion?

Ans: No

36) If it is correct how?

Not applicable

37) If it is wrong how?

Not applicable

38) Do you think Lingayathism can be given Constitutional recognition as independent religion?

Ans: Not necessary. Because it is being already recognized by the masses.

39) Why?

Ans: Not applicable

Special question; as you see the Sikhism has got constitutional recognition by this a person unknown to India come to visit the nation; first of all he can notice the existence of Religions in the country. Getting the constitutional recognition, the valuable Dharma can propagated through the world is it correct? At least the world can notice the name.

Ans: No, not all, getting the constitutional recognition is not way to propagate it, we should not make efforts other than this, and to notifying the world. We should not break the Dharma.

40) What do you suggest to improve the practice of Lingayathism in general?

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Ans: As president of All India Veerashaiva Maha Shabha I am making much more efforts to propagate the great morals preached and practiced by Sri Basaveshwara.

41) If Lingayathism is given constitutional recognition, is it harmful to integrity of India?

Ans: Yes.

42) Who is founder of Veerashaiva?

Ans: you should in order about history (past) we are thinking about future. Our society must unite to be strong; unnecessary facts must be neglected that is why I do not comment on this matter.

43) What is Ethics of Veerashaiva?

Ans: Ashtavarana & Shatsthala

44) Propagating Basava is nowadays at the top is it correct?

Ans: Correct.

45) If it is right, how?

Ans: Because Basava's teachings are topmost requirements to the society at the race of time.

46) If it is wrong, how?

Ans: Not applicable.

47) Is there anything needed to improve Veerashaiva?

Ans: only needed is practice.

48) What are your efforts/ideas regarding further improvement towards the practice of Veerashaivism?

Ans: Our (Veerashaiva Maha Shabha) efforts are going on regularly to preach the Dharma and unify.

49) What is your message to society?

Ans: Firstly, I complain the 1) Government policy 2) Education system 3) Abhiman Shunya generation.

1) Government policy is wrong. The Govt is not giving projects, which helps the society and promote Desh Bhakti, I want to take an example, Chief Lokayukta of Karnataka Sri M. N .Venkatachala, who is a genieous person. Who wants to

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kick out the corruption. From the administration, and he will do so. He has not empowered to do good work. So many waste projects has been launched in the interest of self this is destroying the future.

2) Our education system is absolutely wrong. I want to give only one example to prove this former president of Pakistan General Parvez Mush raff told in a press meet (I had news cutting with me) in Pakistan a pupil is teached in its first entry class that "It is your foremost duty to strive and sacrifice for Islam and Nation." What we have in our education system, every thing is waste. In my notion, we should give first preference to our Desha (country) and remove the caste system from our constitution. We are making thousands of slogans in very high voice that India is secular country. Where secularism is living. Whichever field you can take as model casteism is still ruling. And it is due to the Government policy itself.

3) *Abhiman Shunya* Generation; our society is also going in the wrong way. Most people are thinking about self only. No one worries about the Nation.

As president of country level society (Akhila Bharatha Veerashaiva Maha Sabha) which has 125 years of serving history to the society. I am striving to eradicate evils of society at the age of 84. I am not afraid of the result. We do not think the extent of good work. We should proceed in the bestowed work.

50) Youths are future/property of the Nation. What is your massage to Youths?

Ans: In the teen age the youths are capable to do and achieve anything. It is the golden time (decision-making period) that's why they should have patience, choose good hobbies, and take right path of life at right time.

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2. Interview with Sri Madh Rambhapuri Jagadguru Prasanna Renuka Veer Someshwar Raja Deshikendra Shivacharya Bhagavatpadaru. Srimad Rambhpuri Veera Shimhasana Mahasamsthana Peetha, Bale Honnur. 577 112. Chikmagaluru Dist, Karnataka. On 1st Feb 2006 (At Dahannura (S) Tq Bhalki)

1) Is Lingayathism part of Hinduism?

Ans: Yes

2) If yes how?

Ans: It does not have separate existence.

3) If no how?

Ans: Not applicable

4) Are Veerashaiva and Lingayaths different?

Ans: yes

5) If yes how?

Ans: Both are different names of same Dharma.

6) If no how?

Ans: Not applicable.

7) Has Lingayathism its own ethics?

Ans: No

8) Basaveshwara belongs to which of the following? 1) Prophet 2) Guru 3) Preacher

Ans: None of the above.

9) What is concept of Istalinga?

Ans: Istalinga is nothing but Sthavara Linga. Only the difference is outer layer (Kanti) is fixed for Trataka Yoga is called Istalinga.

10) Which is supreme Soul?

Ans: It has no name.

11) What is concept of God in Lingayathism?

Ans: God is formless.

12) Lingayaths are permitted to worship only 1) Guru 2) Linga 3) Jangama, is it right or wrong?

Ans: wrong

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13) If it is right, how?

Not applicable

14) If it is wrong, how?

Ans: They can worship Idol of God also,

15) Should Down trodden, economically backward class people be given equal right in Religion?

Ans: No.

16) If yes why?

Not applicable

17) If no why?

Ans: Because in the Chatur Verna system (which is ancient) the religious right is restricted upper classes.

18) Universal fraternity can be achieved by 1) Hinduism, 2) Veerashaivism, 3) Lingayathism, How?

Ans: Hinduism.

19) Do you not think if women are not given equal chance in every field of life, then half of the population will be in dark?

Ans: No

20) If yes, what are the remedies with Hinduism Veerashaivism to solve it?

Ans: Not applicable.

21) Is Lingayathism has mention in its religious literature to eliminate the problem?

Ans: Women having the duty of maintain the family, and children.

22) What the Ethics of Hinduism?

Ans: Why you are bifurcating Lingayath from Hindu. What I tell about Hindus is applicable to Veerashaiva &Lingayaths.

23) Hindu, Veerashaiva & Lingayatha, among these which one can cover all the sections of society?

Ans: you should not think in this way. It is the ancient Religion as old as Harappa, Mohenjodaro culture. It is life style that's why we are not authorised to analyse it and list these all. I think it is unnecessary.

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24) How?

Ans : No doubt Hinduism already practicing it.

25) Who is the inventor of Istalinga?

Ans: You should not bother about this. Not by Basavanna. Before Basavanna Istalinga was exist. Basava got Istalinga Deeksha by his Guru Jataveda Muni.

26) Lingayathism denies Veda is it correct?

Ans: No, not at all.

27) If it is correct, how?

Ans: Not applicable.

28) If it is wrong, how?

Ans : Cant you know so many references of Veda, Shastra are made in Vachana literature

29) What is the remedy for present day disintegration of Hinduism?

Ans: the people are became very selfish and neglecting the great culture of the soil, where they are born. The religious activities also have been corrupt today. Only the remedy for the disintegration is that religious preachers should give proper knowledge of Veda, Shastra & Purana and stop disintegration.

30) What is your notion about forcible conversion into Islam by religious names Jihad & terror?

Ans: No comments.

31) What are your points of view on spreading Christianity by providing service, education?

Ans: No comments

32) Faith in religion is waste of time and labor. It is the thought of nowadays trend Is it correct?

Ans: No, your question is wrong.

33) If correct how?

Ans: Not applicable

34) If wrong how?

Ans: Not applicable

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35) Lingayatha is a stable, complete & independent religion?

Ans: No

36) If it is correct how?

Not applicable

37) If it is wrong how?

Not applicable

38) Do you think Lingayathism can be given Constitutional recognition as independent religion?

Ans: The question is wrong. Who empowered you to separate Lingayatha from Sanatana/Manava or Hindu Dharma. It is serious crime; no one is empowered to do so. If anybody is indulged in this work is punishable very cruelly.

39) Why?

Not applicable

40) What do you suggest to improve the practice of Lingayathism in general?

Ans: why you are afraid about Lingayath. We should think about Manava Dharma. We should remember a very important saying "Dharmo Raksahati Rakshitaha" one protects the Dharma, in turn he will be protected by Dharma.

41) If Lingayathism is given constitutional recognition, is it harmful to integrity of India?

Ans: As I told already dividing Dharma is crime

42) Who is founder of Veerashaiva?

Ans: No comments,

43) What is Ethics of Veerashaiva?

Ans: There are so many ethics exist in Manava Dharma

44) Propagating Basava is nowadays at the top is it correct?

Ans: Wrong.

45) If it is right, how?

Ans: Not applicable.

46) If it is wrong, how?

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Ans: Basava is devotee, so he should not given that much importance.

47) Is there anything is needed to improve Veerashaiva?

Ans: No.

48) What are your efforts/ideas regarding further improvement towards the practice of Veerashaivism?

Ans: My efforts are going on. We are striving for human religion/ Manava Dharma. The improvement is not needed only thing we should think about is practice the ancient Dharma..

49) What is your message to society?

Ans: Be united, Think united, Manava dharma only is only meant for united ness of human beings.

50) What is your message to the youths?

Ans: Youths should study the Dharma and fallow the same.

3. Interview with Pujya, Sri Shivamurthi Murugharajendra Sharanaru.

Brahanmatha, Chitradurga.on 23rd January 2006 (At Bidar)

1) Is Lingayathism part of Hinduism?

Ans: No, Lingayathism is an independent religion, because Basavanna fought against the discrimination between male and female as well as forward and backward community. So Basavanna launched a revolution. Hence Basava Dharma, or Lingayathism has its own entity or existence in Karnataka, India.

2) If yes how?

Ans: Answer to the question 1 covers it.

3) If not how?

Ans: Not applicable

4) Are Veerashaiva and Lingayaths different?

Ans: Yes both are different. See Veershaiva is traditional one but Lingayatha is a Purified religion, a revolutionary religion, so in this way Basavanna focused on Lingayath religion.

5) Has Lingayathism its own ethics?

Ans: Yes, it has its own ethics. Kayaka means divine duty, Dasooha,

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divine charity and then equality, purity, mercy or compassion, these are the principles of Basava Dharma/ Lingayatha.

6) Basaveshwara belongs to which of following1) Guru 2) Linga 3) Jangama?

Ans: Basavanna is a Prophet, Guru, also a free thinker.

7) What is concept of Istalinga?

Ans: Istalinga is for meditation, for concentration, it is the symbol of equality and it is the symbol of awareness and knowledge.

8) Which is supreme soul/Atman?

Ans: According to me there is no Atma.

9) What is concept of God in Lingayathism?

Ans: We should not believe the mythical God. We believe in the society. Society itself is God. Shiva Sharana's one who believe in Basava Philosophy he/she became Sharana and Sharane, we believe Shiva Sharana's as godly personalities.

10) Lingayaths are permitted to worship only 1) Guru 2) Linga 3) Jangama, is it right or wrong?

Ans: Yes, other than these three nothing is worth to worshipping.

11) If it is wrong, please specify which may be worshipped by the Lingayaths?

Ans: Not applicable.

12) How far if it is correct?

Ans: Not applicable.

13) Should Down trodden, economically backward class people be given equal right in Religion?

Ans: Definitely yes.

14) If yes why?

Ans: Not applicable.

15) If no why?

Ans: Not applicable.

16) Universal fraternity can be achieved by which one of following? 1) Hinduism 2) Veerashaivism or 3) Lingayathism?

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Ans: Basava Philosophy can achieve universal fraternity, universal fraternity.

17) How?

Ans: It likes every body; it loves everybody without any kind of barriers.

18) Do you think if women are not given equal chance in every field of life, half of the population will be in dark?

Ans: Women, yes.

19) If yes, what are the remedies with Hinduism Veerashaivism to solve it?

Ans: So according to Hinduism there was no liberty for women i.e., there was no religious rights for women. She couldn't, she can't practice any kind of spiritual rights. In Lingayathism there is full liberty for women. So she may wear the Istalinga or she can meditate with Istalinga.

20) Has Lingayathism mentioned in its Religious literature to eliminate the problem?

Ans: Yes Vachanas are the religious literature of Lingayathism

Special Question: Is there something in Vachana Sahitya to redeem the women?

Ans: In the Vachanas of Jedar Dasimayya *"mole moodi bandare hennembaru, Gadda meese bandare gandembaru, Valage sulivatmanu gandu alla, hennu alla.*

21) What is the Ethics of Hinduism?

Ans: In Hinduism one can believe in many God's and than in rationality. Rationality is the main point.

22) Hindu, Veerashaiva, Lingayatha among these which one can cover all the sections of society?

Ans: According to me Basava concept is the vast and wide concept. And In 12th century Basavanna made an effort. By that effort nearly770 Amara Gana united in side the Anubhava Mantapa. They represented their own caste, and Basavanna established a casteless society. Now a days I am trying to implement Basavanna's preaching's. Men are equal, in those days Basavanna

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united all parts of the society. Similarly in these days I am making efforts to unite the society, in the name of these Sharana's.

23) Who is the inventor of Istalinga?

Ans: Basavanna.

24) Lingayathism denies Veda, is it correct?

Ans: Yes, Lingayatha doesn't follow Veda, Agama, Shastra and etc.

25) If it is correct how?

Ans: Not applicable

26) If it is wrong how?

Ans: Not applicable

27) What is the remedy for present day disintegration of Hinduism?

Ans: See people are enjoying liberty, See people know about liberty because of exploitation they are quitting from Hinduism, every community expects its independent entity.

28) What is your notion about forcible conversion into Islam by religious names Jihad & terror?

Ans: Ooh it is very controversial issue, I don't pass any comments. If it is happening in the name of religion, so it is not proper.

29) What are your points of view on spreading Christianity, by providing service, education etc?

Ans: It should practice tits Ideals

30) Faith in religion is waste of time and labor. It is the thought of nowadays Trend Is it correct?

Ans: So instead of religion, now-a-days people believe in concentration and in than meditation concentration is very very important. Let me explain about concentration, it is revolution in universal religion.

Special Question: Now youths are not interested in religion, nor interested to read the religious literature. What is your message to them?

Ans: So we are not giving good ideas or proper ideas so they are away from these. we should explain in scientific way

31) If it is correct how?

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Ans: Not applicable.

32) Lingayathism is stable, complete & independent religion yes/ no?

Ans: Yes.

33) How?

Ans: No response.

34) Do you think, Lingayathism can be given constitutional recognition as independent religion?

Ans: Yes it requires the constitutional recognition. Already Jaina Dharma and Sikh Dharma are liberated. They have independent status. Hence Lingayathism can also get it, our efforts are also going on in this direction.

35) Why?

Ans: We explain the liberty, unity and other good values other than this we should demonstrate concentration, how to concentrate and how to overcome tension of day to day life of the youths , they can realize Basavanna teaching and my view.

Special question : What is your massage to youths?

Ans: Youths have good service and they are the property of nation. In this way we are strong. We should prove youths have strength.

Special question: What is the use of Sahaja Shivayoga?

Ans: See there are many benefits of Sahaja Shiva yoga mainly we can reduce our mental worries, tension, depression and emotion. So I can give the good idea with the name as, if a person practices Sahaja Shiva Yoga every day. He need not suffer from mental torcher, worries etc, it makes a new person.

Special question: Can we realize these scientifically?

Ans: Yes, I don't focus any kind of unscientific idea I don't say any thing without base of science.

Special Question: some people say that Veerashaiva and Lingayatha are same words, what is your point of view in this regard?

Ans: Veerashaiva has fundamentals of traditional matter where as Lingayaths are free thinkers.

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Message; People should realize their strength, power and then intelligence, patience, strive to get the wisdom, choose proper way.

4. Interview with Dr. J. S. Patil, Professor and Dean, Department of Law, Gulbarga University, Gulbarga. On September 9, 2006

1) Is Lingayathism part of Hinduism?

Ans: No Lingayathism cannot be a part of Hinduism, because Lingayathism comes in 12th century, as a reaction against Hinduism. As an etinomy of Hinduism which comes into existence. Hinduism basically preaches philosophy of *Varnashrama Dharma*, where as Lingayathism not only preaches equality, but also practices equality among all human beings, whatever their race. Religion, caste, language and place of birth and whatever it may be, women men all are equal that is how whatever we today find in constitution of India. Equality, freedom, fraternity these are all the things which have been preached by Lord *Basaveshwara* during 12th century itself. He laid foundation for Lingayath philosophy.

2) Are Veerashaiva and Lingayaths different?

Ans: To a very great extent they are different because Veershaiva is a sub sect of *Shaivism* Philosophy and Veershaiva is one small group which follow basically Shaiva Philosophy and there can be *Lingayaths* also Lingayath is a very wide concept in which people, belonging to various religions and faiths have joined in northern India, from southern India, People belonging to different races, religions and caste have come, and then you know they have followed the faith of Lingayath religion so that is how when Lingayath religion was launched during the 12th century, many people including people belonging to *Veerashaivaism* joined Lingayathism that is how Lingayath religion is a large religion, it is a Global religion, Cosmopolitan religion, Secular religion as against *Veershaivism* which is a part of Hinduism. A small unit of Hinduism. In Hinduism there is broad divide between *Vaishnava* and *Shaiva*, and within *Shaiva* there are nearly 7-8 other sub sects in which *Veershaiva* is the one. Whereas Lingayathism is a highly cosmopolitan type of a religion which is the most model and dynamic religion

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as against Veershaiva, which is very short, sighted very small sub sect of Hinduism.

3) Has Lingayathism its own ethics?

Ans: Yes Lingayathism has its own independent ethical philosophy. Lingayathism means Universality, Universal brotherhood. Basaveshwara himself described as *Vishwamanava* so whatever that has been preached in Hindu philosophy interms of *Vasudaiva Kutumbakam* has adopted you know that has been practically brought out in real practice by Lord Basaveshwara, during 12th century, in addition to that, the ethical philosophy that is now developed under the Lingayathism is unparalleled. it has the pedestal of equality, freedom, abolition of untouchablity,

Kayaka, Dashoha, which are unparalleled, you have to work for the betterment of society, work for your own self, work for the shake of society, and work for the shake of God. So these are the three-dimensional processes that have been in built into the very mission of enterprising activity by the person himself instead of going to temple or anywhere else. You work for yourself, work for society, work for God and that's how you can salvage yourselves and attain heaven or *Kailasha* that is how *Kayaka Ve Kailasha* is basic tenet, basic ethics of Lingayatha Philosophy.

4) Basaveshwara is 1) Prophet 2) Guru 3) Preacher, which is correct?

Ans: Basaveshwara should not be elevated to the level of God. Many people call Basaveshwara as the God. Put his image and then perform Puja as Hindu people do. That is not correct. Basaveshwara should be taken as Guru. Basaveshwara is the Guru of Lingayatha Dharma, Lingayatha religion and God is Linga. That is our God is universal he is shapeless. He is structureless; he is *Sarvantaryami* omnipotent and omnipresent.

God is there every where, in the whole of universe, and Basaveshwara is the Guru of Lingayatha Dharma. He actually brings in force; he comes as communicator, he comes as a

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driver, steering whole Dharma into active procession as we say that Gita is driven by Lord Krishna in Hindu mythology, in same passion Basaveshwara comes to give that driving force that spirit to the Lingayatha religion that is how he should be taken as the Guru and he should be adored as guru. He should be respected as Guru. He should not be elevated to Godhood, and other wise the *Brahmanda,* concept of Linga, loses its importance. That should not happen.

5) What is concept of *Istalinga*?

Ans: Yes, Istalinga is a most unique and dynamic concept that is, you know, evolved by Lord Basaveshwara. Istalinga is the God whom you like the God, whom you have chosen voluntarily by your own self. He is not the God which has been imposed upon you by somebody you wanted him there fore you had accepted him. You have incorporated him. You have to do it. "Linga Aayatha" is a concept, you are wearing your god on to your body, that is the process which we call as Lingayath/ Lingayathism, so that is how Linga is concept Atma Linga, is the concept first time developed by Lord Basaveshwara which is almost like Atmalinga outer manifestation of Atma linga, Atma Linga is hidden inside your body, its replication is Istalinga that is visible on the body to remind you every time that the god is there in you. And its outer manifestation is there with you hanging right upon our chest, which is very near to you heart where is your actual Atma. Which is your Atma Linga That is there and your external Istalinga is also right upon it. So that there is lot of simile scientific, rational, spiritual, all things have been brought together in the concept of Istalinga by Lord Basaveshwara.

6) Lingayaths are permitted to worship only 1) Guru 2) Linga 3) Jangama, is it right or wrong?

Ans: Yes, exactly because we (Lingayaths) do not, goes to temples. Because in temples what happens is, mediator intervenes and destroys the relation between the God and disciples. In Atma Linga such a thing does not happen. In Istalinga it doesn't happen that's why, meditation performance of Puja to Linga is

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an accepted philosophy in Lingayathism and Guru has to be respected because, he is the person who teaches the whole lesson of life, so Guru is to be respected. To Linga, you had to perform Puja. Jangama is your own whole society, the whole dynamic, and you have to respect it. Because, God is hidden in all these three. In Guru, in Linga, in Jangama, these are the three things to whom we have to adore, and then we attain salvation. It is a very opt prepossession that has been dealt up by the Lingayath philosophy.

7) Should Down trodden, economically backward class people be given equal right in Religion?

Ans: That is the primordial philosophy of Lingayathism, because, Basaveshwara identified himself as the son of Chennayya, the untouchable, the Atishudra, as it has been described. He always called himself child of Atishudra, and then ultimately his whole mission was elevate every to down trodden, sechduled caste, other backward community people on to the level of the other socially affluent people, Equality is the hallmark of Lingayath philosophy, that is the reason why anybody can embrace Lingayathism and can be endured with the "Istalinga" and then he can become a Lingayath. Qualification required is to work, and work and work should be his mantra (chant), render contributions to the society in terms of Dashoha, work should be his entire trade and with these things Guru, Linga, Jangama will help him in becoming a Lingayath.

8) Universal fraternity can be achieved by which one of the following 1) Hinduism 2) Veershaivism3) Lingayathism.

Ans: Yes among these three undoubtedly by Lingayathism, because Hinduism cannot, because, already at the global level Hinduism is attracting terrific criticism and counter attacks especially by the fundamentalist in the Islam religion as also Christianity, we have seen lots of some violent Scenes of some Christian father along with child being burnt in Gujarat, and then day before yesterday only we suffered a terrific on flat on some of the Muslim brothers in Malegoan in Maharastra. Lots

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of such activities are there because of anticsism that has been preached by some of outfits in Hindu philosophy these problems are there which will never find space in Lingayathism philosophy. There is a lot of similarity between Islam and Lingayathism. In Lingayathism what you have is universal God in terms of shape less, structureless Brahmanda in terms of Istalinga. Islam also has God, which is faceless, structureless and it is open space. And then Islams perform their Namaz anywhere in the same fashion as an Istalinga holder, the Lingayath also performs his Puja anywhere, so this is how a lots of similarities are there between Islam, Lingayathism and Christianity even Sikh. But Hindu philosophy stands apart as a different kind of stratified, orchestrated hierarchical type of civilization, where as many other religion whether call it as Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainsm, Islam these are all the religions which come very near to Lingayathism. But Lingayathism stands apart because you find all types of commitments towards whole social transformations that is the beauty of Lingayathism. That is definitely superiormost of religions, and especially when you compare it with Hinduism and Veershaivism it is tremendously type of qualitative philosophy.

9) Do you think, if women are not given equal chance in every field of life, then half of the population will be in dark?

Ans: Definitely, I completely agree with you because in twenty-first century we have seen how women can emerge. Women of our society in India in every where else are proving highly enterprising in all spheres of life. Women should not be confined to four walls, as it is being done in many places, many beliefs, faiths and many philosophies. Women should come out and become an equal partner in the whole of the social process as preached by Basaveshwara during 12th century the way he elevated people like Akkamahadevi, Neelambika, Akkangamma and even the most lowest cadre people like Ayadakki Lakkamma. These are all the people who attained the place of sainthood by being dedicated intellectual, by being Un-alter but yet dedicated in their Kayaka and making all

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kinds of Dashoha which are very much essential. That kind of participatory role for women as has been championed by Lingayath philosophy of the 12th century; we are not providing equal opportunity for women in many respects even today. Take for example the reservation issue in Parliament is big debate going on but there is no reservation of 33% nor 50%. People are not ready to give. You can imagine, in the Anubhava Mantapa of the 12th century, women had equal share, equal opportunity with men. There had not been any kind of bar for women to participate in the religious parliament of those days, called Anubhava Mantapa. That has to be immediately revived in 21st century especially in a country like ours, which is the cradle of Lingayath philosophy.

10) What is the ethics of Hinduism?

Ans: Yes. It is very difficult to describe the ethics of Hinduism, because Hinduism is not a philosophy at all. It's not homogeneous. There are so many branches and sub-branches. But basic philosophy appears to be earlier all during the Vedic period. Sanatana Dharma, during the period of Smrutis, becomes Varnashrama Dharma. Sanatana Dharma, taken as real ethical background of Hinduism, it is yet to be thought with lot of care and caution.

11) Hindu, Veershaiva and Lingayatha among these, which can cover all the sections of society?

Ans: Undoubtedly Lingayath, because Linga is universal. Anybody can be a Lingayath. Even Muslim can be a Lingayath, a Christian can become a Lingayath, a Sikh can be a Lingayath, and many of our Sikh friends are Lingayaths. Though you see concept of Lingayath should not be mistaken to wearing of Istalinga. Istalinga is an outer manifestation of Atma Linga. Every one who practices the philosophy of Lingayathism is a Lingayath. Only wearing Linga or dressing like Lingayath. There are hundreds, Thousands of thousand people wearing Linga and yet they are not Lingayaths. In real sense but there are so many million of peoples who are Lingayaths in real sense. And I have seen so many such people. My Muslim friends, Christian

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friends, Sikh friends, Jain friends, Buddhist friends are actual Lingayaths. That is how Lingayathism is a Universal philosophy. Its universal philosophy is dynamic as against other philosophies you know the sectors.

12) Who is the inventor of Istalinga?

Ans: Undoubtedly it is Basaveshwara who actually proposed the philosophy of Istalinga as an alternative to Sthavara Linga, because people are facing lots of problems to go nearer to Sthavara Linga. It was only one and so many people have to worship the same. You don't get an opportunity to have an exposure to Linga; Istalinga was given to every one by Lord Basaveshwara. Anybody can have it, who is willing to have, can have it. So that is how in 12th century Basaveshwara brings in a new revolution of providing everyone his own private God. As today we think in terms of family Doctor, Lawyer, etc,. I have my own family hair cutter, family designer, every thing in terms of family. During 12th century Basaveshwara has given not only family God, but also personal god for everyone. Even inside the family if you are 4, each one of you can have your own separate God. It was unimaginable kind of a thing during the 12th century and he has given such a marvelous, dynamic concept. Just like your mobile phone in 21st century, He has given mobile God in 12th century. Temporal plain timeless kind of a concept is Istalinga concept by Basaveshwara.

13) Does Lingayathism denies the Veda?

Ans: Yes. As Basaveshwara tells, you have to burn all Veda's. Through Agama's, that is way to devotion. These are the things which according to Basaveshwara wrongly direct the people into straghtified system of society. That is the reason why Vachana should be the nucleus of human civilization and life because in Vachana, you don't have complicated verses, they are written in very simple language of an ordinary man. These Vachanas are very conceptual i.e., which you talk you do, Vachana means an oath, it is a promise. You do the things which you say *"Nudidante Nade"*, *"Nadedante Nudi*. So *Nudidante nadeyade iruvavana Mechana koodala*

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Sangamadeva. If you do not do as you say, your god will not like you, your god will not approve your behavior. It was the hall mark of Lingayath Philosophy that is why you see a hard reality in Lingayathism. What happens in Vedas? Others are to follow it, it is not applicable for you, Brahmana can do anything and every thing and get away with it but *"Sudra"* has to do everything for the sake of getting salvation. He has to do all menial chats. It is not correct. Everyone has to do his part of *Kayaka* (a *Shudra* he also become a *Sharana* by doing a *Kayaka*. *Kayaka* is the gateway of attaining salvation. That is why it is a beautiful philosophy that cannot be found in *Vedas*.

14) What is the remedy for present day disintegration of Hinduism?

Ans: There cannot be any remedy. Because Hinduism is never an integrated religion at all. As a geographical location we can integrate and reintegrate Hindu society. On the whole India has a strong philosophy on the basis like Lingayathism, but unfortunately what is happening in Lingayathism? Philosophy is also becoming fundamentalist, fanatic. People talk in terms of keeping Basaveshwara as their personal God and making him an untouchable not to be touched by other religions, other people, and other faiths. That is absolutely wrong, see, what we have to do is instead of talking interms of *LingaDharana*, we should try to preach the thoughts and concepts that had been developed during those days, Basaveshwara said this Lingayath is a secular religion. Indian constitution says India is a secular nation. So Ambedkar has already accepted whatever that has been preached by Basaveshwara under constitution. So whatever that has been accepted by Ambedkar is to be now practiced. That is the only thing, which we have to do, so that India can get once again reintegrated. As one nation one society.

15) What is your notion about forcible conversion into Islam by religious names Jihad & terror?

Ans: Even Islam doesn't provide any of these things. Islam is also a very peaceful religion, as it was interpreted by Mohammad

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Paigambar. During those days violence was only a Historical reason for the time being because they have to fight for the sake of safety of the community as a whole. But what is happening in those days is totally unfortunate. Any forcible conversation weather by Hindu religion, Islam or Christianity is not good. See the religion is a activity which is to de processed voluntarily by every one. Weather it is Hinduism or any other religion, terrorism is not the solution to the peaceful living of people living together. It has to find its waterloo one day or the other to bring about fraternity. Peace and tranquility. it can be possible only by the state of mind, by the mindset to bring development you know how to understand one another as human being and live like human beings. Forcibly nothing can be achieved, one day it will become destructive as we have found in yesterday in Maharastra such a thing should not happen.

16) What are your point of views on spreading the Christianity by providing service, education and etc?

Ans: Yes, you can see, there is an indirect hidden agenda. They came into different society. There mission is to spread their religion by establishing schools, prayer halls and other kinds of things and Christianity became a global religion that is the idea with which they are spreading this kind of thing in a very systematic manner, you know this can work to some extent and beyond that it cannot. Because ultimately every one has to be convinced about a faith Religion is a faith, which you have to develop in a particular thing. When conversation takes place for allurement like school, books, education some kind of gratification that remains only temporarily. So any religion, which provides certain bribes for persons to embrace religion, cannot be a religion at all. So that is how any missionary expansions are not in the interest of mankind. Man has to be reformed; man has to be developed into that kind of a rhenium. Not by allurement, but by self-creation, self-awareness, self-elevation. Elevation of self by himself has to happen, not by somebody's allurement of small petty things

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which are been attempted by Christianity in some corners of our civilization.

17) Faith in religion is waste of time and labor. It is the thought of nowadays trend Is it correct?

Ans: It is absolutely wrong. Nothing can exist without faith. Science is a faith; science is there. Because, we believe in science. If you don't believe in science it will not be there, Vastu is there because we believe in it. Architecture is there because we believe in it. Art is there because we believe in it. Artifact is there because we believe in it. Religion is also an integral part of human faith. Albert Einstien says that Mahatma Gandhi is the most mystic man of the 20th century, why? Because Einstine believed in certain things including faith that is why for Einstien Gandhi is the most superior man of the 20th century. Who was the Gandhi? Gandhi was highly religious. Means he believed in what he preached and practiced, that is why Gandhi stood apart in 20th century, you take any scientist of the world he is a firm believer of his religion, scientific religion. In the same fashion every one. If he wants to live and survive as to some one, he has to believe parents, his brother, and his children. Without faith you can not function as a human being at all. Even if you want to give something to someone, to go some where and come back, you have to believe in him. Faith is the inevitable truth for every human. the religion is the most important vehicle for establishment of that faith, propagation of that faith you know, for rejuvenation of the faith in 21st century. Without faith without religion society will disastrously come to an end. Only religion can save the society in the 21st century. Even the most modern people of Europe and America are of the opinion that the religion is the only way to come out of the destructive-detastrophy that is larking at the 21st century.

18) Lingayath is stable, complete and independent religion is it right?

Ans: Absolutely, if it is taken in it's original form not in its diluted form it is a highly stable religion as preached by Basaveshwara

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in 12th century. It stands independent in Hindu culture, having revolutionary philosophy. It is also complete a religion as it is the religion having solutions to each and every day to day problem.

19) Can Lingayathism is given constitutional recognition as independent religion?

Ans: Yes it is foremost essentiality of Lingayaths to get constitutional recognition because, Lingayathism is a perfect religion to have the independent status. And it is the duty of central government to grant the recognition as independent religion.

20) What is the concept, and importance of constitutional recognition of a religion?

Ans: Constitutional recognition is a two-fold system. One is 2/3 majority of the Lok Sabha members should pass a bill and it should be accepted by the President of India. . Second one is Supreme Court of India should direct the Government of India to do so. This is the way to get the recognition. Recognition of a religion plays a very important role to introduce the unknown/new visitors to the nation. It shows the existence of the religion to whole world. Very important thing is that especially in the case of Lingayaths, it is very essential, because Lingayaths are unaware of this hard reality. And they don't have the knowledge of the world-acceptable ethics, philosophy proponed by its founder Guru Basaveshwara.

21) Is Constitutional recognition compulsory to every religion?

Ans: There is nothing mandatory that every religion must have recognition from the government. But the recognition play an important role. To propagate the religious ethics to new persons and preach the special features of a religion, the recognition of religion provides significant help.

22) Can Constitutional recognition of a religion can be claimed as human right?

Ans: Yes. If government does not give recognition, then it can be claimed as human right. As you know the religion is top most

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essentiality of every human being. Constitution of India (that is republic) must provide the recognition.

23) Is Lingayathism is able to get the recognition?

Ans: Absolutely, because Lingayathism is stable, complete and independent religion. It has each and every essential feature to get recognition as independent religion. I am sure very soon it will have the independent status of religion. A committee of Law experts, eminent preacher's propagators and Lingayaths well and wishers headed by me are striving to get the constitutional recognition. We are now engaged in collection of evidences and essential proofs. Once we go there, I am confident we will comeback with victory.

24) What is importance of religion for a human being?

Ans: As I told you for every human being religion is very essential. Religion is a faith; on the strength of faith only we are living. There is nothing without faith. Religion only will teach how we should live with happiness, how we should safeguard the rights of others Religion only teaches the man to live with humanity. As far as my knowledge religion is essential as air, food, cloth and water to human being.

25) Dr. M. Chidananda Murthy warns that if Lingayaths get constitutional recognition as independent religion, then also they are part of Hinduism as per Hindu Marriage Act 1955 and Hindu Succession and Inheritance Act 1956. Is it correct?

Ans: No, not at all. As per the above mentioned law, you are considering Sikh friends as Hindus. If you are empowered to consider them, then you may apply his thoughts to Lingayaths. You should note a very important aspect that, every Law is made for the better sense of people, not made to harass anybody. Why do you bother about that law? You should know that only one law cannot restrict Lingayathism. There is another law called Indian Succession and Inheritance Act, which is applicable to Lingayathism after getting the constitutional recognition.

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5. Interview with Mataji (Mata Mahadevi) on 22 Jan, 2006 (At Basavakalyana)

Prominent preacher and well wisher of Lingayathism, who is struggling for the independent existence of Lingayathism, Parama Pujya Mate Mahadevi, (Mataji), Basava Dharma Peetha, Koodala Sangama, District Bagalkot, Karnataka camp at Basava Kalyana.

1) Is Lingayathism part of Hinduism?

Ans: No

2) If yes how?

Ans: Not applicable

3) If no how?

Ans: Lingayathism is not a part of Hinduism. It is an independent religion founded by Lord Basaveshwara in 12th century. It has got its own religious constitution by name "Vachana Sahitya" even rights & rituals customs all differ from entire Hindu tradition.

4) Are Veerashaiva and Lingayaths different?

Ans: Veerashaivism is a cult of Shaivism. Where as Lingayathism is independent religion. Veerashaivas are worshipers of Lord Shiva, one of three deities (three murthy) where as Lingayaths worship Istalinga, a globules emblem. This symbolizes the formless God. So Istalinga worshipers are Lingayaths, whereas Veershaivas are worshipers of Shiva.

5) If yes how?

Ans: No.

6) If no then how?

Ans: No.

7) Has Lingayathism its own ethics?

Ans: Yes, Lingayathism has got its own salient features. Dharma guru Basaveshwara, religious constitution, Vachana literature, religious emblem Istalinga & then they are following their own sociology which is called ativernashram paddhati, because Hinduism follows four fold caste system. Lingayathism doesn't believe in four fold caste system. It classifies only 2 categories

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one is Manawa another is Sharana. Every human being is Manawa by birth and by Samskara by religious congregation Manawa becomes Sharana. So we do not believe in caste system.

8) Basaveshwara belongs to which of the following? 1) Prophet 2) Guru 3) Preacher

Ans: He is a Prophet, a great philosopher, a mystic social reformer. He is a great prophet who has found the independent religion.

Special Question: So many persons say that Basveshwara is not a guru he is a follower. Is it right?

Ans: No, it is wrong. Because guru means a Gnyani who has given great message, so lord Basava is not only a guru, but also a world prophet, Jagadguru, Vishwaguru, Universal guru, so every being is a follower of god. Where as when he becomes Gnyani he becomes guru. So Basaveshwara is (Anuyayi) follower of god and a great guru to his followers.

9) What is concept of Istalinga?

Ans: Lord Basaveshwara gave the emblem which all Lingayaths wear and worship. See Lord Basveshwara preached that god is formless; god manifests in this universe, so god should not be given human form or any insect form, or an animal form. He preached that god has created this world. He suggested that god should be worship in the form of Universe that is why Istalinga symbolizes the Supreme soul-God.

10) Which is the Supreme Soul?

Ans: Creator is the Supreme Soul. Secondly Lord Basveshwara who is the representative of god, is also the Supreme Soul

11) What is concept of God in Lingayathism?

Ans: God is formless.

12) Lingayaths are permitted to worship only 1) Guru 2) Linga 3) Jangama, is it right or wrong?

Ans: Yes, the concept of trinity is very important in Lingayathism. It is said in Vachana literature that God is the supreme soul. He has created this universe. Lingayathism is a Theistic religion & it is said to save this world. He has come in the form of Guru.

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Lord Basavanna came to this world as a representative of God and gave us a new religion. & through the emblem Istalinga God is worshipped. Then third concept is Jangama. Jangama is nothing but the religious preachers, representatives of god. So Guru, Linga, Jangama, is the concept of trinity in Lingayathism.

Special Question: Can Lingayaths worship any thing other than these three?

Ans: No, it is prohibited; because Lingayatha is purely monotheistic means belief in one and only god. And than worshiping God in the form of Istalinga, all other worships means, you see the deities.

13) If it is right, then how?

Ans: Not applicable

14) If it is wrong, how?

Ans: Not applicable

15) Should Down trodden, economically backward class people also be given equal right in Religion?

Ans: Yes. Lord Basaveshwara has given social & religious equality to all without any distinction of castes, creed, occupation and sex. So all the people without any differentiation of Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra should be given religious consecration (Deeksha) and social equality Basaveshwara gave social and religious equal rights to one and all.

16) If yes why?

Ans: Answer of question 15 covers it.

17) If no why?

Ans: Not applicable

18) Universal fraternity can be achieved by 1) Hinduism, 2) Veerashaivism or 3) Lingayathism? How?

Ans: Hinduism, though it preaches Vasudaiva Kutumbakam but preachings are prevailing only in Shastras. The social structure propounded by Vedic or traditional Hinduism has created all these caste systems, and also see wrong product of

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untouchablity is nothing but the product of four fold caste system .He denied all four fold caste and untouchablity because it cannot uplift India and it cannot preach universal brotherhood. Basaveshwara has preached father hood God, brother hood human. He said God is one and all human being are the children of God, so there should not be any differentiation among human beings. He preached not to differentiate any body on the basis of caste or occupation or financial status. He preached to love every body and any body. Then only one can become child of God. Even Veershaivas follow the sociology of traditional Hindus. Among Veershaivas, here are differentiations like Brahmana Veershaiva, Kshatriya Veershaiva, and Sudra Veerashaiva. In Veerashaivism untouchables are not given any religious consecration, in Lingayathism there is no such differentiation. Lingayathism preached by Basaveshwara has shown this Universal brother hood.

19) Do you not think if women are not given equal chance in every field of life, then half of the population will be in dark?

Ans: It is true, but we can deal with this problem by two aspects. See the traditional Hinduism and also so many religions, did not give equal full rights to women. Though some religions gave social equality, they did not give religious rights. Where as Lingayathism preaches, practices and it gives not only social rights and even equal religious rights and secondly if you see the present world, women are really are not given full rights (another thing is, so many women are not interested in what we call gaining economical status, social status & political status. They are not interested in fighting for upliftment of womankind and also they are not interested in attaining full social and religious equality. Women should struggle hard to attain the social & religious equality.

Special question: Lingayathism has something to make women free from bondage & give the opportunities in religious matter?

Ans: Yes, Yes there is no doubt because in Anubhava Mantapa itself founded by Lord Basavanna, in 12th century women were given equal opportunities. So many women used to participate in

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Anubhava Mantapa 1st parliament of world. They used to participate in discussions, and also they were used to explain their own ideas in front of other saints of Anubhava Mantapa. So Lingayathism gives equal encouragement to womankind.

Special question: Nowadays can we apply this thesis to society?

Ans: Sure, it is a very practical religion. Ideologies preached by Basaveshwara and also the principles of Lingayathism are very progressive and also practical. They are applicable to our day today life. So if we make the good propaganda and also real representation of all these ideas. Many people will be attracted and many people can accept it without any deal differentiation of religion or caste. They will accept Basaveshwar's ideologies.

20) If yes, what are the remedies to be undertaken by Hinduism Veerashaivism to solve it?

Ans: It is a very vast subject but we can give just two or three examples. See in the traditional Hinduism it is preached that if a man, on particular day on some day goes and takes a dip in holy water, than he gets purified. We can see people going to Allahabad and taking dip in Sangam Ganga Yamuna, but this type of faith is criticized by Lingayathism. By just taking a dip in water one cannot be purified from his sins. So the ethics of these two religions are differing. That is why in Vachana literature it is said unless one adopts morality he cannot be religious or spiritual. So morality is the stepping stone to religiousness. In this way we can see many such ideas there. See the ethics of Lingayathism is totally different from Hinduism. In ethics we can see individual sin, social sin and national sin and many ideologies in traditional Hinduism get rid of sins by offering some Pujas or by giving some donations (Dana etc.) but Lingayathism doesn't believe in that & it says no, no one can get rid of all these individual, social sins by just giving donation and taking a dip in water or doing some worship. So they have to confess for that and repent for that and again they have to change their mode of life and get purified by surrendering them selves to God. So in this way

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there is lot of difference between ethics of Lingayathism & Hinduism.

21) Has Lingayathism mentioned in its religious literature how to eliminate the problem?

Ans: Answer to the question no 20 covers it.

22) What is the Ethics of Hinduism?

Ans: It is a very vast subject but we can give just two or three examples. See, in traditional Hinduism, it is preached that if, a man on particular day goes and takes dip in water in holy water then he gets purified. We can see people going to Allahabad and taking dip at Sangama Ganga Yamuna. But this type of faith is criticized by Lingayathism. By just taking a dip in water one cannot be purified from his sins. The Ethics of these two religions are differ that is why in Vachana literature it is said unless one adopts morality, he cannot be religiousness or spirituality. So morality is the stepping stone to religiousness. In this way we can see many such ideas there. See the ethics of Lingayathism is totally different from Hinduism. In ethics we can see individual sin, social sin and national sin and many ideologies in traditional Hinduism get rid of sins by offering some Pujas or by giving some donations (Dana etc.) but Lingayathism doesn't believe in that & it says no, no one can get rid of all these individual, social sins by just giving donation and taking a dip in water or doing some worship. So they have to confess for that and repent for that and again they have to change their mode of life and get purified by surrendering them selves to God. So in this way there is lot of difference between ethics of Lingayathism & Hinduism.

24) Which can cove all the sections of society among Hindu, Veerashaiva & Lingayathism?

Ans: It is very clear, you see because Hinduism doesn't give religious consecration to schedule caste schedule tribe and even Sudra's. All these people are called Panchama Vernas and Sudras are considered as 4th class and they are not given any religious consecration. So it cannot save people from religious point of view. Veershaivism is following nothing but

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the repetition of traditional Hinduism, it is following the sociology of Hinduism, so it is only Lingayathism which can give social and religious equality to all, without any sections or differentiation in whole world.

25) How?

Ans: Answer to question 24 covers it.

26) Who is the inventor of Istalinga?

Ans: Lord Basaveshwara. Before Basaveshwara there were only Sthavara Lingas and then Charalingas, they were symbolizing Lord Shiva, and the Shivalinga is nothing but emblem of lord Shiva. Whereas Istalinga is not emblem of Lord Shiva. It is emblem of God, who is formless and who is Creator of this Universe.

27) Lingayathism denies Veda. Is it correct?

Ans: Sure, Lingayathism, and Lord Basaveshwara criticized the defects of Vedas, Agamas, Shruties, Smruties and Puranas, and he gave a new religious literature called Vachana Sahitya and then many other saints, contemporaries of Basava added to the Vachana literature.

28) If it is correct how?

29) If it is wrong how?

Ans: It Not applicable.

30) What is the remedy for present day disintegration of Hinduism?

Ans: Actually all the Hindu saints are not at all interested in what is happening. Why people are going away from traditional Hinduism? See the only remedy is they should give religious initiation or consecration to all Sudra and dalits. Then only they can save Hinduism from its decay, we can call it decay because, day by day it is decaying because they are not giving opportunity to Dalits and Sudras, they are going away from arena of Hinduism. If they want to save Hinduism, Hindu seers should give religious consecration to all Hindus

31) What is your notion about forcible conversion into Islam by religious names Jihad & terror?

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Ans: Actually, you see today not only in India, in the part of world two religions that are Islam and Christianity's are converting people. Christianity through service and education, medical activities they are converting people. And Islam, they are not doing social service or medical, education service but force them But by terrorism in the name of Jihad, it is very wrong. Even in Quaran terrorism is not preached, in the name of God. If one does this violence, it is not actually encouraged by Quaran, but many people have misunderstood their religious scripture and doing that again. Reintrospect our sense because of religious consecration, to Sudras and untouchables they are going away from Hindu zone. They are interested in conversion. There is stuff to Islam and Christianity in Hinduism because of these down trodden sections. Those two religions who are interested in converting out caste or down trodden people

Special Question; Hindu organizations are stopping convertion to Islam and Christianity by force. Is it right?

Ans: They, they cannot stop they roar, only in papers that's all The Hindu organizations are only paper tigers they roar only in papers they cannot stop. Today many poor people are attracted by Christian missionaries showing temptations, then they are going away and then you see even Muslim people are loving these downtrodden people dalits and showing them religious brotherhood, but the Hindu people are not doing these two things. See all Hindu temples have got Crores of rupees, billion of rupees with them, but they are not interested in serving people just they are building new temples and wasting money in the name of Homas, Havanas and Yagnas and in this way they are going in a wrong path. They are not doing social service like medical and other things. And you see Muslim people love the dalits, and once again show them religious and social brotherhood. They are attracting these people but these Hindu traditional people are not showing either love to down trodden people or utilize their income source of temples for social services. Just they roar in paper. They are not working properly.

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32) What is your point of view on spreading the Christianity by providing service, education etc?

Ans: Answer to above (no 32) covers it.

33) Faith in religion is waste of time and labor. It is the thought of nowadays trend is it correct?

Ans: No actually many people have misunderstood religion by seeing these mechanical customs, rituals and meaningless practices, superstitions. Many people who think that themselves as rational just they think, the religion is waste of time. Now, if they know what is the essence of religion and then how religion and spirituality are useful to them. Surely they can understand the need of religion today, even not only need of today but it is need for all, at all the time.

34) If it is correct how? Question35) if it is wrong how?

Ans: Answer to question 33 cover's it.

36) Lingayatha is a stable, complete and independent religion yes/no?

Ans: Yes, sure no doubt at all. It is a separate, independent, progressive, rational religion which preaches brotherhood, and then which gives equal social and religious opportunity to all. So it is an independent religion separate from Hinduism.

37) How?

Ans: Answer to question 36 covers it.

38) Do you think Lingayathism can be given constitutional recognition as independent religion?

Ans: Ya, we should get it. It is the bonded duty of Govt or Parliament to give constitutional recognition. Therefore, not only the religions born in India like Jainism, Buddhism are already give separate status of independent religion, on the same way , on same basis, Lingayaths should also get constitutional recognition. It is bonded duty of Central Government of India to give separate status to Lingayath religion.

39) Why?

Ans: Ans to the question 38 covers it.

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40) What are your ideas to improve the practice of Lingayathism in general?

Ans: Now we are forming a committee, and we are discussing so many things, say today what reformations we need and then what amendments we need, So we have formed Basava Dharma Samsat a committee of 100 people who are studying Vachana literature and who are giving solutions, and then we are forming this code of conduct for the followers of Lingayathism.

41) If Lingayathism is given constitutional recognition, is it harmful to integrity of India?

Ans: No, because see one should understand all these Indian religions. Hindu, Jain, Buddhism, Lingayathism, and Sikhism these are born in India. These five religions are quite different in their thoughts, Philosophy etc. they have got their own independent status, but culturally all are one. So, India is Dharma Bhoomi for all these five religions followers, and they are not at all going against Indian nationality. They are patriots because if they have India in its integrated status, then only they can save their religions, which are born in India. So this recognition of independent religion is not in any way harmful to nation.

Special question; So many persons are blaming that Lingayathism in its Vachana Sahitya many preaching so many be good things. But the followers are not able to follow the preaching's of founders. Is it true?

Ans: 12th century it has applicable in that environment now because time was been changed. We need a few reformations and amendments but totally speaking it is very practical religion. So preachings preached by lord Basaveshwara in 12th century are 99% applicable, but because of change in mode of life say just we have to bring very some, very few reformations and amendments which we are doing now. they are very necessary to present day's society

Special question My ambition is to prove that Lingayathism is an

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independent religion. By means of M.Phil dessertion I want to prove it. Is it possible?

Ans: Yes, Yes definitely it is possible. We have got lot of material, literature and then even supporting material also. We can collect from different gazettes and some orders have been passed by Indian scholars even though courts Definitely it will be very useful thesis if you are able to collect all these and arrange in systematic manner.

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Annexure-D

Letters Opposing Independent Recognition of Lingayath Religion

1) Bhemanna Khandre to Census Commission of India New Delhi on behalf of All India Veershaiva Mahasabha ® Dated: 11-02-2000

2) Dr. Chidanadmurthy to Census Commission of India New Delhi. Dated: 20-03-2000

3) Dr. Chidanadmurthy to Census Commission of India New Delhi. Dated: 20-04-2000

4) Dr.Chidanadmurthy to Home Ministry Government of India. Dated 22-01-2001

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1. All India Veershaiva Mahasabha ® Date: 11-02-2000

Annexure II, Page No 596-600, Basavanna: Karnataka Bharata; By Dr. M. Chidanda Murthy. 2004. Pub: Sapna Book house, Tunga complex, Gandhi Nagar, Bangalore-9

All India Veershaiva Mahasabha ®

Madhavanagar, Bangalore-560001.PB.No.9928

Date: 11-02-2000

To,

The Registrar General and Census Commissioner,

Ministry of home affairs

Gruha Mantralaya

Government of India

Office of the registrar General of India

2-A, Mansingh Road, New Delhi-110 011

Sir,

Sub: Regarding enumeration of Veershaiva/Lingayath in Census-2001 by giving separate code Number in Religion column Q 9 as is done respect of other Religions.

@@@

In continuation of our representation dated 06-01-2000 we wish to supplement as follows in support of our claim that:

1) The all India Veershaiva Maha Sabha is a Registered Association established in the year 1904 to represent and protect the interest of Veerashaivas/Lingayath in the State. National and international level. The members of Veerashaiva/Lingayath religion are residing in the state of Karnataka. Kerala. Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Maharastra. They have maintained their philosophy, doctrine, rituals customs and traditions, tenets as a distinct religion since 12th Century.
2) Lingayath or Veershaiva religions an ancient one propagated

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and universalized by Mahatma Basaveshwara in 12th century. Mahatma Basaveshwara appeared at a time when Indian society was at lowest ebb. As religious and social institutions were more dogmatic, Basaveshwara who is popularly known as "BASAVANNA" attracted thousands of persons through India belonging to all communities from lowest caste to highest caste to his religion. He preached and practiced equality and equal opportunity among the followers of Veershaiva/Lingayath religion irrespective of caste or creed or sex or occupation. The women and downtrodden were allowed to participate and practice religious tenets as equal with others. A unique style literature called "VACHANAS" was produced and popularized. The Vachanas taught religion, philosophy, morals and social obligation in vernacular. Hundreds of Sharanas/Sharanes (Saints/Nuns) (from Kashmir to Kanyakumari) of that period expressed their views, teachings and directions in the form of Vachanas. They are respected as authority on Veerashaivism/Lingayathism.

3. The Veershaiva/Lingayath religion has its own independent Philosophy, doctrine, tenets, rites and custom. Its philosophy of "SHATSTHALA" represents six stages of spiritual attainment and "PANCHACHARA" enunciates the five codes of religious and social conduct. "ASTHAVARANA" provides eight aids to spiritual attainment. It has discarded "VARNASHRAMA" and treated all persons from lowest caste to highest caste and from cobbler to prince as equal and eligible to adopt and follow the religion. It upheld dignity of labour of all occupations and proclaimed "KAYAKAVE KAILASHA" (work is worship). The ultimate goal of a believer of Veershaiva/Lingayatha religion is to become one with God and not to attain "MOKSHA" or "MUKTI" and frees himself from "KARMA" as preached and taught by Hindu religion. As Veershaivism /Lingayathism is different from Hindu religion like Sikkhism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, Christianity etc,. This religion has established and maintained its unique and independent status and identity through centuries. As Veershaivism/Lingayathism is self contained, independent and distinguishable religion from all other religions its followers are

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entitled to be counted separately for the purpose of Census in 2001, in order to avoid the repeatation of the omission/commissions committed during the previous Census operations due to the confusion among the field staff.

4. the Karnataka State Government and the Central Government are keen on making socio economic study of all people belonging to all caste, creed and religions in Census 2001 and survey their socio economic condition and further provided more benefits to the needy persons, in all caste or religion based on such socio economic survey to uplift the 'Down trodden' in the society. It is because of this reason, nearly exact or correct enumeration of population of Veerashaivas/Lingayaths in each State is essential for claiming benefit provided by State and Central Government to socially and economically backward people of Veershaiva/Lingayath religion. To achieve ethics it is nesscery to give a separate abbreviation or code no to Veershaiva Lingayath religions is done in respect of Hindu, Islam, Christians, Buddhists, Jain's and Sikkh's. It is significant note that the come into force from 1955-56 have already recognized Veershaiva/Lingayath Religion as a separate religion and this should be give effect in Census2001. several requests were made by many persons and organizations even including Akhila Bharata Veershaiva Mahasabha to your honour to enumerators Veerashaivas /Lingayaths separately by giving abbreviation or code number as is done to other religions right from 1978, but this request was turned from but this request was turned on he ground that:

i) The time is very short, since process has already started in 1981.

ii) That the authorities have been instructed to "note the religion stated by an individual without argument to the enumerators and this will not cause any injustice to any religion as at the time of finalization of population of different religions as all person will be counted separately as per their statements, and exact population of each religion can be ascertained by this process.

5. The purpose of Census is to make correct enumeration of persons residing in country. For that purpos4e the Census

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department has adopted system of using abbreviations like 'H' for "Hindus", 'M' for "Muslims", "C' for Christians, 'S' for Sikhs, 'J' for Jains and for others direction was given to the enumerator to record faithfully the name of the religion stated by the individual without involving in any argument . So collected information was tabulated and published by Census Department. This system has been in force as per the Para 68 of instruction to enumerators. In that regard circular was also issued on 19th July 1980 on those guidelines census were conducted. But so far as enumeration of Veershaiva /Lingayath are concerned the ultimate result was disastrous. The reasons are as follows:

	In India	In Karnataka
Sikhs(S)	1, 20, 79,146	6,401
Buddhists(B)	47, 19,900	42,251
Jains(J)	31, 92,572	2, 84,508

Whereas Veershaiva/Lingayath population was counted among "other religions" and separately tabulated and shown as;

	In India	In Karnataka
1971Census	7,.26,481	
1981Census	42, 75,680	38, 61,355
1991Census	32, 69,355	26, 69,703

On the other hand, the estimation of Veershaiva/Lingayath population as per two backward class commission was:

First Backward Class Commission (1972)	43, 92,699
Second backward Class commission (1984)	61, 14,666

5.1. According to the estimation of the population of Veershaiva/Lingayaths in Karnataka is more then one crore and at National level, it is between two to three Crores. By following the present method of enumeration wherein Veershaiva/Lingayaths are counted under the heading "Other" religions and the total population is shown in the census reports totally inaccurate. The said enumeration is now proved to be not correct and not workable because the enumerators belong to lower cadre of services and they do not take pains to write the word "Veershaiva

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or Lingayatha" in the form provided. If it is an abbreviated form it will be easy for him enter Veershaiva/Lingayath in the column provided. This practical aspect should be taken into consideration to provide correct figures.

6. The Veershaiva/Lingayath population in Karnataka is estimated to be more than one Crore and about two to three Crores in entire India. But in Census report of 1971,1981 and 1991 though a specific direction to the enumerators to correctly note down the religion that is mentioned by each individual seems to have been grossly disobeyed or ignored in preparing the report and it was prepared without consideration of actual population of Veershaiva/Lingayath according to their whims and fancies and have casually dealt and with and as such this enumeration has resulted in injustice to the entire population of Veershaiva/Lingayath religion. The Census of Lingayath population is bogus and cannot be relied upon for any purpose. The Petitioner Association believes that this grave mistake in ascertaining correct population is due to failure of the part of Registrar general in not granting or assigning an abbreviation or code number to Veershaiva/Lingayath religion at the time of making census.

7. That the Petitioner association even filed a W.P. no. 8391 of 1990 before the Hon'ble High court of Karnataka seeking separate abbreviation to Veerashaiva/Lingayath religion in Census to be conducted in 1991, but the same was dismissed on the sloe ground that the registrar General of India has issued specific directions to the officers of the Department and enumerators to strictly mention the name of each religion given by the individual and count them properly at the time of finalization of Census and in view of this the Petitioner cannot rise any doubt regarding the confide in the preparation of final Census report of 1991. But Veershaiva/Lingayath has been drastically reduced in 1991 compared to 1981 Census which cannot be accounted or explained. Thus non allotment of abbreviation or code number has seriously affected the interest of Veershaiva/ Lingayath religion. Hence the Petition Association is making this representation once again, as the Census department has

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committed a blunder in reducing the population of Veershaiva/Lingayaths in all the census reports and they have caused great injustice to them and it is likely and further the people will lose faith in the census Report which is prepared spending several hundred Crores of rupees of publics fund.

8. By not allowing a separate abbreviation or code Number to Veershaiva/Lingayath religion while conducting census operation in 2001 it will amount to hostile discrimination between Veershaiva/Lingayath religion and other religions as contemplated under article 14 of the Constitution of India.

Therefore it is prayed to do justice to the people to the Veershaiva/Lingayath religion by giving separate abbreviation or Code Number to Veershaiva/ Lingayath in religion Column to ascertain their exact population of Census 2001 and further find out their socio economic position in India to enable them to claim appropriate benefits from the Government on the basis of Census Report in the larger interest of Veershaiva/Lingayath religion.

With high regards,

Yours faithfully,

President

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2. Dr. Chidanadmurthy Date: 20-03-2000

Annexure III, Page No 601-604, Basavanna: Karnataka Bharata; By Dr. M. Chidanda Murthy. 2004. Pub: Sapna Book house, Tunga complex, Gandhi Nagar, Bangalore-9

Date: 20-03-2000

To,

The Registrar General and Census Commissioner,

Ministry of home affairs

Gruha Mantralaya

Government of India

Office of the registrar General of India

2-A, Mansingh Road, New Delhi-110 011

Sir,

Sub: Regarding enumeration of Veershaiva/Lingayath in Census-2001 by giving separate code Number in Religion column Q 9 as is done respect of other Religions-plea by All India Veershaiva Mahasabha®, Bangalore, dated 11.02.2000-the said plea worth ignoring.

===

The All India Veerashaiva Mahasabha® Bangalore has sent a memorandum to you dated 11.02.2000demanding that the Veershaiva/ Lingayath be considered as belonging to a religion other then Hinduism and that they should be allowed to list themselves/Lingayath as V/L(Veershaiva /Lingayath), just are entered as 'J', Christian as etc,. In the Religion column of the Census (Copy enclosed).

I am student of Veershaiva religion, Literature and society and I must say, humbly that I am considering as one of a very few authorities on the subject. i have done extensive research in the said field . I was selected as the General President of the All India Sharana (Veershaiva) Sahitya Sammelan in 1996. my research papers have been extensively quoted by scholars in the regional, National and International Journals. My biographical book in English on Basaveshwara (Basavanna) has been published by the national Book trust, New Delhi: the English Original has

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not only seen many editions, it has been rendered into Kannada, Hindi, Marathi and Bengali and been published by the same national Book trust.(Xerox copies if the facing Sheets reproduced). My collection of research papers "Hosathu Hosathu" was given an award by the Central Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, as the best work published in the Kannada language during the year 1997. I taught Kannada in the University of Chicago in 1967-68, when I did by Post-doctoral in Linguistics. I was the General President of the All India conference of Dravidian Linguists held in Trivendrum in 1986. I was also the section president of the Fourth international Conference on Historical Linguistics (1980) held in the Stanford University (U.S. A) All this is only to establish my credibility.

Coming to the petition by the All India Veershaiva Mahasabha. They have tried to argue that Veerashaivism was by Basaveshwara in the twelfth century and they have popularized also taken pains to argue that Veerashaivism is a religion distinct from Hinduism, as Sikhism, Christianity and Islam are. Their attention is utterly baseless, and is motivated be petty political expectations like minority status, reservations etc. but the truth is as follows:

1. Basaveshwara did not establish any new religion, and it is true that he reviewed the earlier Veerashaivism, gave it a reformist dimension and popularized it. He is certainly one of the most renowned reformists in pre-modern India. History is yet to recognize the originator, if there was one, of the Veershaiva faith.

2. Basaveshwara and his contemporary Sharanas have, it is true, in certain occasions, come down heavily on the Vedas and the Brahmins. They have also come down heavily on the contemporary Veershaiva clergy, because of the failure to practice what they preached. At the same time, they have quoted profusely as authority from the Vedas, the Upanishadas, the Puranas and the Smiritis to prove their line of argument. The Sanskritic Shaiva Agamas which proponed the "Shatsthala" philosophy of the Veershaiva sect, proclaim that they accept what Vedas accept, and rejects what Veda reject (of 3. "Veda-dharmabhidayitvat siddhanatajkuah sivagamah vedabahyavarodhitvat vedasammataa ucyate" ("Since this Siddanta, which is also called Shivagama is in conformity with the Dharma which is mentioned in Veda and also rejects or opposes which is Veda-bhya 0r anti-Vedic, whatever

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said in this text is Vedasammata, ie. It has the sanction of the Veda". Siddantashikhamani, Introductory Vers NO. 12).

3. As the name itself suggests, Veershaivism is a form of Shaivism like the Kashmir Pratyabhijna Shaivsm, the Tamilnadu Shaivism, the Lakulisa Shaivism of Gujarat. The sect is called "Vira-" because the followers are committed devotees of Shiva, carrying his emblem "Linga" on their body. The Linga (or the God Shiva) is part and parcel of their physical body, unlike other Shaivas who go to the Shiva temple once a while and worship God Shiva.

4. Numerous early Veerashaiva religious works announce in clear terms that Veerashaivism is "Veda-Agama-Sammata", ie., Veerashaivism is in conformity with the tenets of the Vedas and the Agamas.

5. in the present day Karnataka. About fifty "Veda-Sanskrit" schools are run by the Veershaiva Monasteries, like the famous Siddaganga Math in Tumkur District and the equally well known Suttur Math in Mysore.

6. The Jangamas or the priestly community of the sect takes pride to prefix their names as "ve"- ("Vedamurthy"). Some of them were, and are scholars in Sanskrit, specializing in Vedas.

7. All the Veerashaivas are the worshippers of Shiva, the Hindu god, and they perform worship in Shiva Temples, their "Linga" on their body in private. In fact a section of the Jangamas called the Aradhyas wear both sacred thread and Linga on their body; also a section of the followers of Veerashaivas called the "Nagarthas" also wear sacred thread and "Linga" simultaneously on their body. Numerous Veerashaivas work as temple priests in Shiva temples in Karnataka, in Andhra Pradesh and Maharastra.

8. Interestingly, there was a dispute in 1923, concerning the right for performing Puja in the Vydyanath temple at Parali. The Brahmans argued that since the Veerashaivas were "Sudras" they were not allowed to perform worship in the temple. The Veerashaiva, in turn, argued vehemently that they were actually "Veerashaiva-Brahmains" ("Lingi-Brahmins") and that they were the real Brahmans following the Vedas in spirit. The then Nizam Government of Hyderabad State decided the case in favour of the Veerashaivas.

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9. Regarding the term "Hinduism" the working formula evolved by Tilak is found to be adequate and satisfactory and the Supreme Court has approved of this formula in many cases. The working formula evolved by Tilak is as follows"

"Acceptance of the Vedas with reverence; recognition of the fact that the means or ways to salvation are diverse; and realization of the truth that the number of gods to be worshipped is large, that indeed is the distinguishing feature of Hindu religion" (B. G. Tilak; Giata rahasya).

Veerashaivas worship Shiva, no doubt; many of them also worship Vishnu, Shakti, Banashankari, Mailara and many village gods and goddesses. The present day Veerashaivism is in no way different from Hinduism. As stated before, Veerashaivism does accept the Veda as the authority.

As an objective researcher and a seeker of truth, I put forth before you, with all the vast material in hand, and pray humbly that you should not be hasty ascending to the demand of the all India Veershaiva Mahasabha. I would even say that the commission could dismiss the demand as unjust and baseless. In case, the commission accedes to the unjust demand of the Veershaiva Mahasabha (which is politically oriented), the social impact of the decision would be disastrous, to say the least.

Sir, in case you need evidence, which is ample, as to the Veerashaiva sect having its philosophical roots in Vedic Literature. I would be very glad to supply it willingly. If you feel that I should come over to Delhi and be present in a real hearing before you, I would be glad to do so and produce further evidence and also to address oral argument. I should mention, incidentally, I am born of a traditional Veerashaiva family and take pride in calling myself a Hindu.

With high regards,

Yours faithfully,

(Dr. M. CHIDANADA MURTHY)

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3. II[nd] Letter of Dr. Chidanadmurthy Date: 20-04-2000

Annexure IV, Page No 605-608, Basavanna: Karnataka Bharata; written by M. Chidanadmurty; Pub: Sapna book house Bangalore.

Date: 20-04-2000

To,

The Registrar General and Census Commissioner,

Ministry of home affairs

Gruha Mantralaya

Government of India

Office of the registrar General of India

2-A, Mansingh Road, New Delhi-110 011

Sir,

Sub: Regarding enumeration of Veershaiva/Lingayath in Census-2001 by giving separate code Number in Religion column Q 9 as is done respect of other Religions-plea by All India Veershaiva Mahasabha ®, Bangalore, dated 11.02.2000- Hindu Marriage Act (1955) and other acts Misquoted in the plea submitted to you.

Ref: My Letter dated 20-03-200

With reference to the above subject and to the letter mentioned above, I humbly submit that the all India Veershaiva Mahasabha, while arguing that since Veerashaivism is a religion distinct from Hinduism, and hence the Veerashaivas should be given a separate Symbol V/L in the Religion column Q-9, have said in their letter.

"It is significant to note that the Hindu Marriage Act, Adoption Act, Succession Act which have came into force from 1955-6 have already recognized Veershaiva-Lingayath Religion as a separate religion and this should be given effect in Census 2001".

It is very unfortunate that the Veershaiva Mahasabha has not looked into the Acts; in fact, they have misquoted the Acts. The Hindu Marriage act 1955, clearly say that the Veerashaivas (Lingayaths) are

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Hindu. It says:2.Application of Act-(1) this Act applies

(a) to any person who is a Hindu by religion in any of its forms or developments including a Veershaiva, a Lingayath or a follower of the Bramho, Prarthana or Arya Samaj.(b) to any person who is a Buddhist, Jaina or Sikh by religion."The same is repeated in case of other Acts also (copies enclosed). All the Acts consider Veerashaivas as Hindus. I have, in my letter mentioned above, shown clearly that Veerashaivism is not in any way different from Hinduism and that the Veerashaivas are no doubt, Hindus.

I earnestly request you, again, to dismiss the plea by the Veershaiva Mahasabha, and continue to treat Veerashaivas as Hindus.

With high regards,

Yours faithfully,

(Dr. M. CHIDANADA MURTHY)

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4. Dr.Chidanadmurthy Letter to Home Ministry. Date 22-01-2001

Annexure V, Page No 607-610, Basavanna: Karnataka Bharata; By Dr. M. Chidanda Murthy. 2004. Pub: Sapna Book house, Tunga complex, Gandhi Nagar, Bangalore-9

Date 22-01-2001

To,

Shri L. K. Advani,

Hon'ble Minister for Home Affairs,

Government of India,

New Delhi.

Sir,

Sub: Enumeration in Census-2001: procedure of 1991 Census to be continued.

Please permit me to place you a few facts which need your personal and urgent consideration. Any new step taken in the enumeration procedure of Census-2001 may or rather will have dangerous implication of the future Hindu-population pattern of India.

History

Veerashaiva (Lingayaths) form the single largest community in Karnataka. As the name itself suggests, the Veerashaiva sect is a branch of Shaivism, which is itself a branch of Hinduism like Vaishnavism. Basaveshwara (Basavanna) of the twelfth century was a remarkable social reformer who, as the central figure of Veerashaiva community brought in certain welcome radical changes in the rather conservative Hindu society. The social reforms and the Vachana literature he and his fellow reformers composed infused a sense of self confidence among the Veerashaiva community. As a result, during, the reign of the British in India, the Veerashaivas refused to be listed under the "Shudra" category in the Census. They said they were "ati-varnashramis /varnathitas" (a community which was beyond the "varna"-system) among the Hindus. They argued their case with strong evidence culled out from various ancient scriptures and submitted a memorandum to the Bombay Government) a large part of Karnataka was the Bombay presidency riled directly by British). Mr. Enthovan, a top officer-in-charge of the Census made fun of the Veerashaivas claiming top be

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Hindus. He submitted a report to the British government in 1903, saying that "the Veerashaivas or Lingayaths are not Shudras, and also not Hindus, though they claim themselves as Hindus". He subsequently wrote an article for Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics to this effect.

This report of Mr. Enthoven had little effect on the Veerashaiva community as a whole; but it was taken seriously by few Veerashaiva influential leaders who were pro-British. The seed of separation sowed by the British officer began to take roots. The Veerashaiva Mahasabha in 1904 and 1908 had approved of the resolution saying that the Veerashaiva were Hindus. But the same Veerashaiva Mahasabha reversed its earlier stand under the influence of the pro-British Veerashaiva leaders, passed a resolution in 1940 to the effect that the Veerashaivas were not Hindus and should be listed as Non-Hindus like the Jains, the Buddhists and the Sikhs in the Census.

The same deed of separation was sowed into the minds of the Sikhs in Punjab and the Kodavas in Coorg by British. They were able to separate the Sikhs from the Hindus by approving the "Ananda Marriage Act" in 1909; but did not succeed in Coorg in separating the Kodavas from the Hindus.

Post-Independence Period

A few political-minded Veerashaiva leaders are agitating now that "since Veerashaivas are not Hindus", they must be treated as such in Census-2001. they have written to the Registrar General and Census commissioner(New Delhi) to give them separate symbol V/L'(Veerashaiva/ Lingayath), just as symbols "H" for Hindus, "J" for Jains, "B" for Buddhists, "S" for Sikhs, "C" for Christians and "M" for Muslims are allotted. The all India Veerashaiva Mahasabha even misquoted the Hindu marriage act saying that "since the Act treats Veerashaivas as Non-Hindus, the same Act may be applied here and a separate symbol is given to them".

I wrote to the registrar General and Census Commissioner (Ministry of home affairs) saying that the Veerashaiva are Hindus and Hindu Marriage Act clearly considers the Veerashaiva as Hindus. The Act reads like this.

"Application of Act-(I): this Act applies (a) to any person is a Hindu by religion in any way of its forms of developments including a

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Veerashaiva, a Lingayath or a follower of Brahmo, Prarthana or Ary Samaj; (b) to any person who is a Buddhist, Jain or Sikh by religion."

The registrar General and the Census Commissioner, Ministery of home Affairs, cannot go against the Act and give Veerashaiva a separate symbol. It is quire justifiable.

1991 Census procedure

The Census enumerators were given clear instructions during the Census-1991 operation top record whatever a person mentions as his religion in the religion-column of the Census sheet. For example, if a Veerashaiva said his religion was Veerashaivaism it was recorded accordingly. But during the final totaling , all those who mentioned that their religion was Veerashaivaism were treated as Hindus and the number of Veerashaivas, Namdevas, Brahmakumaras, Praarthana Samajists etc., who claimed their religion such were given under the heading "the Hindus" (copy attached. The procedure is quite reasonable.

Census-2001

I am given to understand from reliable sources that the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, New Delhi, has not taken any decision whether to follow the 1991-prodedure to change procedure. To enlist the Veerashaivas separately along with Hindus, the Jains of Muslims is illogical and dangerous.

Because, the "Vokkaligas" (Agriculturist) and the "Beda" (hunters) communities in Karnataka have taken clue from Veerashaiva and have issued instructions to their community members to list themselves as 'Vokkaligas" and "Bedas" in the religion column. If this tendency spreads to other communities a\or castes and if all of them record their castes in the religion-column, there will be very few who call themselves Hindus. You can see the potential danger inherent in it.

And to record the names of their castes instead of Hinduism will be against the act itself.

Hence, Sir, the same procedure as followed in the Census-1991 operation be continued without any change, now in the case of census-2001.

Let me, as a Veerashaiva and a Hindu, and as a serious researcher, tell you that I have opposed vehemently the claim of the all India

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Veerashaiva Mahasabha who have announced that "there is nothing like Hinduism as a religion and that a Veerashaivaism is an independent religion like Buddhism and Islam". Most of the thinking Veerashaiva and the religious chief feel that they are Hindus, but are afraid to come out and the religious chief feel that they are conviction in public their conviction. I have no doubt that truth will assert itself. As Kannada poet has. Said It is only 'rita' that wins and lot 'anrita".

But "rita" is without a form; it needs to be articulated and supported by human beings.

As an able administrator and a great patriot. I am sure that you would not dismiss the claim of a section of the Veerashaiva community as insignificant/ my fear is that if things are left to themselves, there will be a gradual mental distancing between the Hindus and the Veerashaiva and a time many come then things go out of control, though not in the near future.

Thanking you,

With great regards,

Yours sincerely

(Dr. M. Chidanda Murthy)

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Sharana Nagshetty K Shetkar hails from lower middle class family from village Gadgi of Bidar Dist Karnataka State. He was born on 12th of April 1974. His father Sharana Kanteppa was a teacher. Inspired by the greatness of Lingayathism he entertained an ambition to prove that Lingayathism is an independent religion. With firm commitment he wanted to show the world that Lingayath religion founded by Lord Basavanna in the 12th Century is a progressive and rational religion.

Nagshetty is working as a Village Accountant. Along with his job, he passed MA with Philosophy and Religion from Madurai Kamaraj University of Madurai.With an ambition to present a thesis on Lingayathism, he continued his study for M. Phil under the guidance of Sri Dr. D. Balaganapathi, Asst Prof of Philosophy. Shetkar completed his work "A Critical Comparative Study of Lingayathism and Hinduism" and secured M. Phil Degree from Dravidian University of Kuppam in May 2009.

Sharana Nagshetty has participated in several seminars and conferences and submitted research papers and has published articles in reputed journals.

- He desires to do Comparative and Comprehensive study of all religions and show to the world what are the noble ideas existing in all religions. It is to be noted that religious tolerance, can be achieved only by understanding each others religion.
- He desires to do Comparative study of Lingayath religion with other religions of the world.
- His ambition aims at preparing an Encyclopedia of Lingayathism.

May his ambitions be fulfilled and may the readers get enlightened by his Scholarly works!

Her Holiness Jagadguru Mata Mahadevi (Mataji)

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